School of History and Archaeology



The Archaeology of Kuwait

By

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirements for a Ph.D. in Archaeology

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Summary

This thesis addresses the archaeology of Kuwait from 13000BC to the 18th century AD, to further understand its significances within the Arabian Gulf and wider world. Kuwait has witness many diverse cultures By comparing for the first time the archaeology, geography, and historical sources, I illustrate that this region has been continual inhabited and used as an important hub of social networks since its beginnings. By introducing the Ubaid civilization and their relations with other regions, we witness the first exchange and trade strategies in Kuwait. By looking at the burial mound phenomenon in Kuwait we witness a hiatus of permanent settlements and a time when people were more nomadic. The impact of these mounds resonated into later periods. Petroleum based substances play a key role in modern Kuwait; the Ubaid and the Dilmun first developed the usage of bitumen, and here we see how that created links with others in the world. Ideas move as well as people, and I demonstrate the proto-Hellenistic and Hellenistic periods in Kuwait to illustrate influences from the Mediterranean. Modern Kuwait is Islamic, and here we will investigate how and why and the speeds at which Christianity gave way to Islam, and the impacts of a different religion on the region. In highlighting Kuwait’s past, I show how the state became one of the most democratic and diverse places in the Arabian Gulf.

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Chapter 1

'…Kuwait was established in AD1756…'

(Abu Hakma 1984)

Kuwait is a relatively small country, which has a strategic location in the far northwest of the Arabian Gulf. It has important ports and links between the north and south. The popular conception of Kuwait is that it originated in the mid-18th century AD, with there being little or no appreciation of events before AD1756. Kuwait has, however, a rich and deep history, that spans many cultures and regions. One of the aims of this thesis is to introduce these histories in a comprehensive synthesis for the first time.

Excavations in Kuwait over the years have discovered several important archaeological sites, which date to different periods and cultures; indicating the diversity of human beings who settled in this land through time. I believe this to be a result of Kuwait being located between the societies of Mesopotamia, the land of civilisations, and the southern cultures, such as Magan and Mulukha. Unfortunately, little has been written about Kuwait's cultural diversity via the archaeology to give us a comprehensive image of the development of civilisation and cultural heritage. There are a few books discussing some of the archaeological sites in Kuwait, but they do not do justice to the archaeology of Kuwait. There are, however, several publications that discuss chronologically the development of civilisation and culture in the wider Gulf region. I will further discuss these below.

1.1 Publications on Kuwaiti archaeology

These are wonderful publications on Kuwaiti archaeology, but they do not give a comprehensive image. Several books have been published by the international missions that have worked in Kuwait. The Danish archaeological expedition for instance discussed the excavations in Failaka Island, and particularly the terracotta figurines, the Hellenistic pottery and enclousures, second millennium settlements, material culture and Bronze Age pottery (e.g. Mathiesen 1982; Hannestad 1983; Kjaerum 1983; Hojlund 1987; Jeppesen 1989). These works deal with a specific period and location within Failaka, namely the Hellenistic period, the Bronze Age. One cannot doubt the effort of the Danish archaeological expedition, but their work simply does not reflect the full image of Kuwait, or even Failaka Island, which contains several sites dating back to various other periods of time. Similarly, the French archaeological expedition again focuses only on the Hellenistic period and the Bronze Age (see Salles *et al.* 1983).

The first volume discusses several subjects; for instance, the history of Failaka, testimonia, inscriptions, cuneiform, (Salles *et al*. 1983); most of the second volume considers the excavations in Tell al-Khazana, a recent and ancient site, (Calvet and Salles 1984-1985); while the third volume examines plant remains from the Hellenstic and Bronze Age, and terracotta figurines, (Calvet and Gachet 1986-1988).

In a similar vein, The Kuwait National Museum published Gharbiah and al-Najjar’s (1990) excellent study of the cuneiform inscriptions that are available at the museum. The Kadhima site in Kuwait is discussed in al-Duweesh (2005; see also Chapter 8). It is an Islamic site dating back to the Abbasid period. The study contains historical and archaeological data. It is a small book made up less than 100 pages, but it is important as it discusses the Islamic site, and further informs about the history and archaeology of this region. Carter and Crawford (2009) discuss the H3 site in Sabbiyah in the State of Kuwait. This site was discovered in 1998, and is attributed to the Ubaid civilisation. The British and Kuwaiti archaeological teams excavated this site, and their reports (e.g. Carter and Crawford 1999) discuss the remains found and compares them with those further away in the Arabian Gulf and Mesopotamia.

1.1.1. Publications that focus on the chronology of the Arabian Gulf

Many studies focus mainly on the chronological sequences and less on interpreting the archaeology or situating it in a broader context (e.g. al-Duweesh 2008). In this thesis I will adopt a fine grained approach similar to those publications, but I will broaden my scope, to encompass the breadth of what is happening in Kuwait.

Al-Bader (1974) discusses chronologically the archaeological remains from the Arabian Gulf during the fourth millennium and the third millennium BC. Here, focus is on pottery, ornaments, architectures and religion. The importance of this book is that it gives readers an understanding of the similarities and differences between the archaeology in the Arabian Gulf from that period, such as the Dilmun civilisation. It does not, however, focus on the archaeology of Kuwait in general, or consider what happens after.

Rice (2002) discusses chronologically the archaeological remains in the Gulf region from 5000 to 323BC. He examines the nature and geography of the Arabian Gulf, from the establishment of states and civilisations, the myths of Sumer, Dilmun and Gilgamesh, to the arrival of Alexander the Great in the region. Rice (2002) also discusses chronologically the history of the Arabian Gulf.

In contrast, al-Duweesh (2008c) examines chronologically the prehistoric periods of Kuwait archaeology. The article examines the Mesolithic to the Ubaid civilisation. The author discusses all the archaeological materials that are known about; for example, stone, pottery, fishing tools, flint tools and marine transportations (e.g. boats). Again, there is little attempt to connect this anaylsis with later periods or other locations in the Gulf region.

Potts (1989) discusses the Arabian Gulf in antiquity from the Pleistocene to the Achaemenid period and the later arrival of Alexander the Great, and eventually to the introduction of Islam. Potts (1989) studies chronologically the Eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula, especially the two oases called al-Hasā and Qatif, which are now in Saudi Arabia. This book is the result of the author's involvement in a number of archaeological projects that have occurred through out the Arabian Gulf. In doing so, he looked at archaeological sites from the top of the Gulf through the Straits of Hormuz, at the entrance of the Arabian Gulf. Then he continued his study until he reached beyond the Musandam Peninsula to the Ras al-Had on the Oman coast, which is located in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. Potts' (1989) writings are characterised by accuracy and depth, analysing the possible relations between societies that passed through the region. There is no doubt that the work is a significant source for scholars and those who are interested in the archaeology of the Arabian Gulf. It was published, however, over 20 years ago and during this time

many new sites have been found. As a result, there are new findings for the archaeology of the Arabian Gulf, which are contrary to those previously noted. For instance, at the Ubaid civilisation sites in the State of Kuwait. In addition, it does not deal in particular with Kuwaiti archaeology. This work will address these gaps in knowledge and synthesis.

As the result of Potts' three seasons of excavations in Tell-Abraq, located in the United Arab Emirates, his 1993 paper discusses the development in the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula. He has studied chronologically the relationships between Magan and Mesopotamia during the third millennium BC, the connections between Magan and Mesopotamia in the second millennium BC, and Magan and Elam in the second millennium BC. Potts (1993) focused on the trade between the north and the south (Mesopotamia and the Arabian Gulf) through the cuneiform inscriptions. Here, Potts (1993) highlights that there were relationships between Mesopotamia and the Eastern Arabian Peninsula, even though there is no mention of this in the Mesopotamian texts. I will apply this idea of long distance relationships, that may have been maintained over long periods of time in this thesis, as a means of further understanding the significances of Kuwaiti archaeology (e.g. Chapter 3 and 5). The earlier work of al-Bader (1974) compliments Potts (1993) as it examines important Mesopotamian documents, such as literary, political and economic texts. All of these documents refer to Dilmun, Magan and Melukha inter-relationships. The importance of this study is that it explains some aspects of life that were prevailing in that period. It is useful for my subject specifically as I will discuss the past trade relationships of Kuwait.

Al-Thani (1997) considers chronologically the Dilmun civilisation's development from the end of the third millennium to the middle of the second millennium BC. She focuses on the relations between Dilmun and its neighbours, the Arabian Gulf and Mesopotamia, and discusses in particular the connections between Dilmun and Amor, in Syria. This thesis will further consider Dilmun relationships with other areas, demonstrating that Dilmun was an intrical part of Kuwait (see Chapter 5).

The Danish expedition produced several essays based on the recordings of a number of archaeological surveys carried out in Qatar from 1956 to 1965. The surveys chronologically identified sites in the Qatar peninsula from the beginning of the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic period. The mission studied the material culture and classified them into typological groups according to their shape and age (Hojland 2009, 6-62). Little was attempted beyond the creation of typo-chronological sequences.

Taha (2003a) also discusses the State of Qatar but in prehistoric times. Here, the author relied on the results of the Danish archaeological expedition of 1956-1965 (see above), the British archaeological mission of 1973, and the French archaeological team of 1976. According to the British and French teams' results, the author reclassified chronologically the archaeological sites that the Danish archaeological team developed, from the earliest to the most recent (see Figure 1.1). Taha (2003a) relied on the results of C14 and made comparisons with the other sites in the Arab Gulf, such as Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, or further away, such Syria and Jordan.

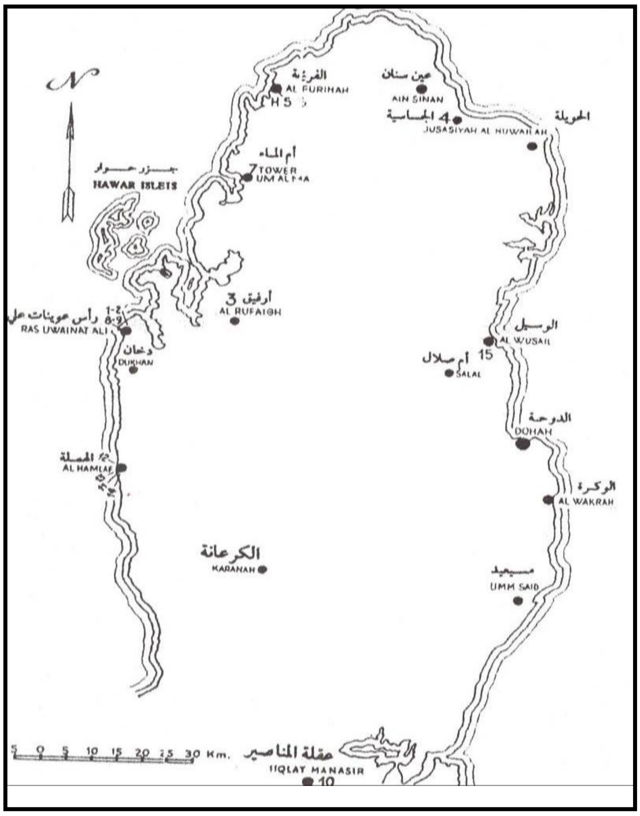


Figure 1.1. Map showing prehistoric sites in Qatar (Taha 2003a, 87).

Abdul-Na‘im’s (1996) work chronologically examines the early development of humans in the Sultanate Oman from the around 1,000,000BC to 100BC. The author relied on both published and unpublished archaeological information (the grey literature), which were the results of archaeological surveys and excavations in the Sultanate Oman. It is a useful book to understand the type of settlements, the economy and the people who lived in the Sultanate Oman; here we will discuss similar themes.

A recent and important work focuses on events over time in the United Arab Emirates (Potts *et al*. 2003). Here, discussion is on the beginnings of the Neolithic through to the Islamic period. This book gives a comprehensive image of the Unites Arab Emerates’ history and archaeology to create chronological sequences for this country. In a similar model, al-Husain *et al.* (2003) discuss the archaeological sites in

Saudi Arabia (see Figure *1.2*). The 13 volumes are divided by the regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (e.g. Riyadh; Mecca; Medina; Al Qassim; Eastern Region; Asir region; Tabuk; Hail; the Northern Border; Jazan; Najran; Al- Baha; Al-Jawf). The importance and strength of both approaches (i.e. Al-Husain *et al.* 2003; Potts *et al*. 2003) is that they consider regions separately and chronologically from prehistoric to modern times, with their particular material cultures, to figure out if there were relationships between them. This is an approach I will adopt in this thesis.



Figure 1.2. Map showing divided regions of Saudi Arabia (al-Husain 2003, 20).

1.2 Archaeological expeditions in Kuwait

In 1957, the British Political Agent in Kuwait visited the Danish archaeological expedition, which was excavating in the Bahrain Fort, and he invited them to visit Kuwait, specifically Failaka Island (Bibby 1985, 265). Accordingly, the Department of Education (now Ministry of Education) forged a working agreement with the Danish expedition, with some conditions, including one that allowed the Danish expedition to take half of the archaeological finds (Hojland 2009, 7-10). The Danish expedition started the excavations in 1958 and they worked in Kuwait until 1963 (see Figure 1.3).



Figure 1.3. Photograph showing F6 excavated by the Danish team (Hojland 2009, 31).

The director of the Danish expedition was P.V. Glob and his assistant was G. Bibby. Most of the archaeological sites on Failaka Island were discovered by the Danish expedition, for instance F3 (Tell Sa‘d), F4 (al-Khan), F5 (Tell Sa‘id) and F6.

These sites have different materials which refer to different time periods, such as the Bronze Age, Dilmun Civilisation (Dilmun stamp seals were the most important finds of the expedition), Hellenistic period (Greek temple), Christain period and Islamic period (al-Hashimī 1980, 81; see Chapter 5, 6, 7). Bibby (1985) described the situation in Kuwait as being better than Bahrain because the Department of Education was responsible for the expedition and supplied everything for the Danish expedition (Bibby 1985, 322-21).

In my opinion, the limitation of this expedition was that it was not concerned with Kuwaiti archaeology in general. It focused only on Failaka Island and neglected both other islands and the mainland of Kuwait, which would have given a broader understanding of Kuwaiti archaeology. Moreover, although the Danish excavations ended in Kuwait in 1963, the team did not begin publishing their reports until the 1980s, when they issued two series about Failaka Island. The main goal, as stated by Bibby (1985, 333-9), was to look for the centre of the Dilmun Civilisation in the Arabian Gulf. The Danish concentration on finding the main location of Dilmun meant that their expedition contributed little to Kuwait archaeology in general.

The archaeological team from the Johns Hopkins University, which is from the United States of America, investigated in the Arabian Gulf in 1972 (see Figure 1.4). It conducted a geographical and archaeological survey in Kuwait and its Islands. This group pin-pointed the location of many archaeological sites in Kuwait and recoreded the known archaeological remains (Carter 1972, 1-33).



Figure 1.4. Photograph showing the John Hopkins University team in Failaka Island (National Council for culture, Arts & letters 2009, 7).

This publication now forms an important historical reference for archaeological sites in Kuwait. Unfortunately, many sites which they mentioned have now disappeared due to neglect by the Kuwait government, such as the Burgan Basin site within the main oil areas.

In the 1970s, an Italian archaeological expedition carried out archaeological surveys. This team worked on Failaka Island from 1975 to 1976, and surveyed most of the known archaeological sites on the island. It collected samples from the surface (field walking), and drew a map illustrating the archaeological sites, with possible chronologies. In addition, it excavated the site of al-Qusur on the island (National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters 2009, 8). Although the focus was just on Failika Island, this study demonstrated the benefits of considering sites within broader settings.

The joint Jordanian and Kuwaiti archaeological team worked on Akkaz Island in 1978, which is a small island located within Kuwait Bay (see Figure 1.5). The team

discovered a sequenced settlement from the Christain to the Islamic period (National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters. 2009, 9). That a protective wall was discovered led the team to review possible relations, or the break down of relations, to other people's beliefs and areas (see Chapters 7 and 8).



Figure 1.5. Photograph showing Jordanian team in Akkaz Island (National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters 2009, 9).

This work revealed that it is not only Failaka Island that has archaeology but also that there are archaeological sites on the other islands. Unfortunately, this will have to remain as speculation as the island has became part of the modern Shuwaikh port, in which construction and development destroyed most the evidence.

The Slovak archaeological team worked on Failaka Island from 2004 to 2008, in al-Khidr, which is located on the northwest of Failaka Island (see Figure 1.6). This site dates to the second millennium BC. The site was discovered by the Danish expedition in 1958 but it did not conduct further field work. The expedition discovered that a new square building had been built from local stone, with large broken pottery jars dating to the second millennium BC (Department of Antiquities and Museum 2006, 6). Work conducted at al-Khidr site was both diligent and comprehensive. In addition, it produced a survey of several sites on Failaka Island,

such as, al-Qusur, al-Quraniya, F6 and al-Zur. In 2008, the team published it results from studies on Failaka Island.

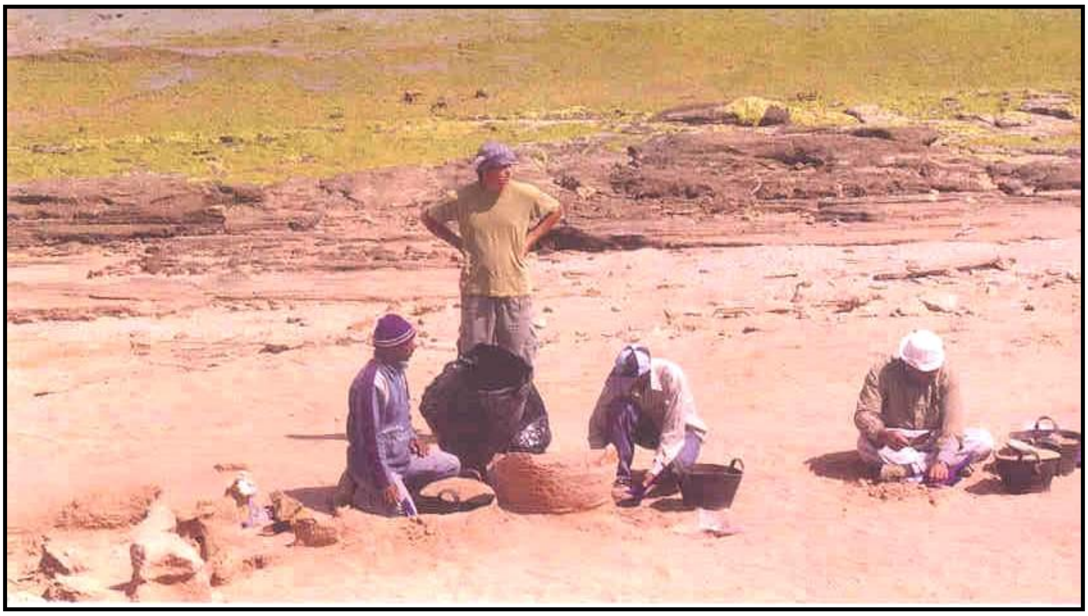


Figure 1.6. Photograph showing Slovak team in al-Khider site (Benedikovà 2008, 22).

The French archaeological expedition also worked at Akkaz Island, on the same site which the Jordanian archaeological team had excavated previously. In 1993, it discovered a small church and Abbasid coins. The church is similar to the one found in the al-Qusur site on Failaka Island (Shehab, al-Mutairi and al-Amir 1993, 17-18). From 1983 onwards, the French archaeological expedition focused the most part of its excavations on several sites on Failaka Island such as, Tell al-Khazna, the Hellenistic fortress (see Figure 1.7), Temple Tower and al-Qusur site (National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters 2009, 10). Unfortunately, their excavations at the Hellenistic fort have, however, stopped due to funding problems (al-Wohaibi pers comm.).



Figure 1.7. Photograph showing the northwest part of the Hellenistic Fort excavated by French team (National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters 2009, 21).

The Greek archaeological team conducted excavations at the Hellenistic fortress between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, for two seasons (see Figure 1.8). This team focused on the previously un-excavated southeast part of the castle, and they discovered the badly weathered remains of the outside fortified clay wall (National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters 2009, 17). The team also excavated the north and south parts of the castle and found many Dilmun stamp seals, bronze coins, bronze tools, pottery, stone tools and clay figurines. In addition, the team restored some pottery jars and Ikaros stone (al-Saei 2008, 1-4). This team accomplished a lot in a very short period of time. For example, it conducted a magnetic survey, ground penetrating radar, total station, excavated and restored the archaeological remains.

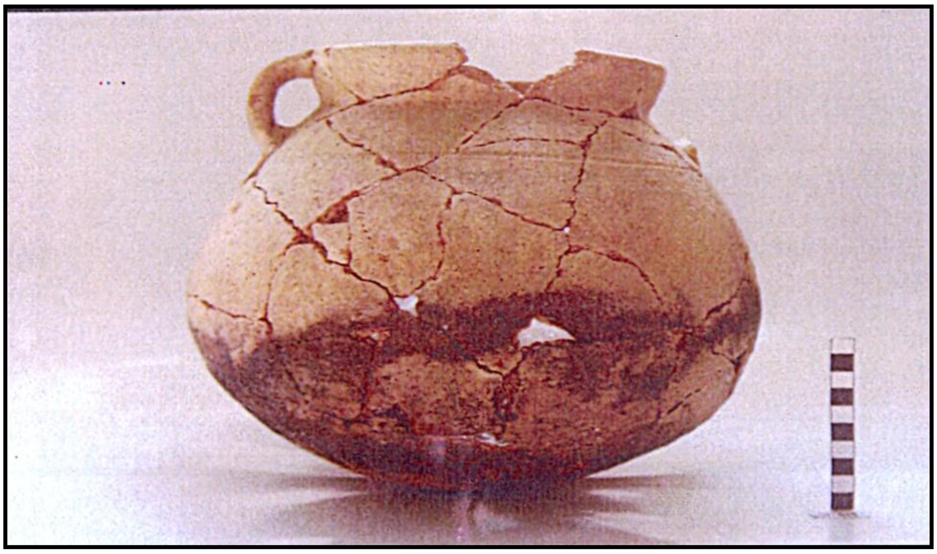


Figure 1.8. Photograph showing a Jar from Hellenistic Fort restored by Hellenistic team (National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters 2008, 30).

The British archaeological team from University College of London (1998-2003), the Polish archaeological team (2007-2009), and the Arabian Gulf archaeological teams (2001-2009) all worked in Sabbiyah; the latter two working at the Cemetery Hills site. Sabbiyah is an important archaeological area in Kuwait as it is located in the north of Kuwait, which is close to Mesopotamia (Department of Antiquities and Museum 2006, 3). The British team worked for four seasons (see Figure 1.9) and discovered the now famous H3 which is dated to the Ubaid Civilisation (5300 - 3500BC) through the pottery found. This site reflects the beginning of the human settlement in the land which is now called Kuwait and the relations between Mesopotamia and the East of the Arabian Peninsula (Carter and Crawford 1999, 43-58; see Chapter 3).



Figure 1.9. Photograph showing British team at H3 (Crawford 1999).

The Polish archaeological team worked in Sabbiyah (National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters 2009, 16), and focused its work on the Cemetery Hills, finding large amounts of beads in some tombs dating to the Bronze Age. It also found the remains of human bones (Bielinski 2007). Al-Duweesh (2011), reported that this team did not unfortunately have enough experience to excavate Cemetery Hills, as they accidently destroyed some of the graves (see Figure 1.10).



Figure 1.10. Photograph showing grave destroyed by Polish team Sabbiyah (al-Duweesh 2011, 2).

The Arabian Gulf team, however, during its excavations at Cemetery Hills and Kadhima (see Figure 1.11) discovered numerous skeletons in a foetal position and a jar of pottery dating to the end of the fourth millennium and the first half of the third millennium BC. It is similar to the jar that was found at Hafit in the United Arab Emirates from the Jamdat Naser period (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 66-69). This team also worked at several other archaeological sites in Kuwait. For example, on Failaka Island it excavated Sa‘ida where they discovered mosque structures dating to the Islamic period (National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters 2009, 13-14).

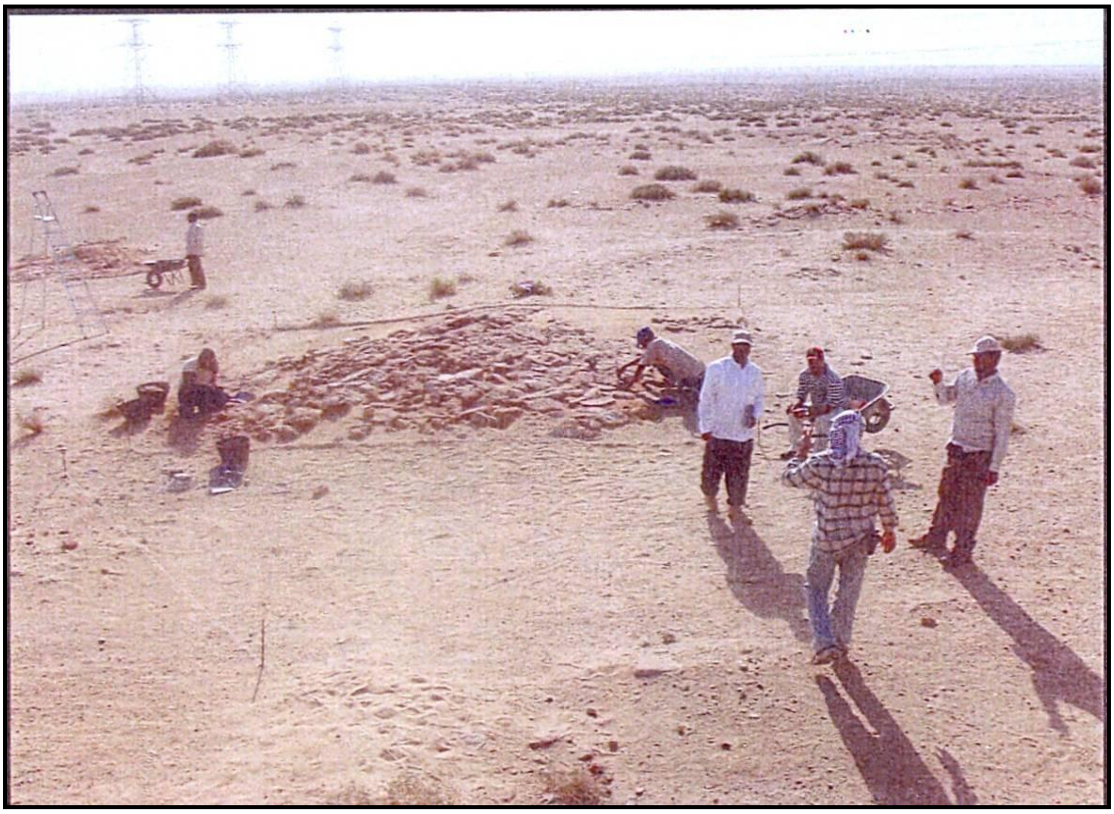


Figure 1.11. Photograph showing Arabian Gulf team’s excavated grave in Sabbiyah (National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters 2009, 16).

The British archaeological team from Durham University worked between 2009/2010 at Kadhima. This site was discovered by Sultan al-Duweesh, a supervisor of the archaeology department at the Kuwait National Museum, and he identified most of its features. The British team came and conducted a new archaeological survey covering 5.37 km^2 to develop a better understanding of the site (see Figure 1.12). Indeed, the team recorded all the potential structures that could form the subject of later research. The team also collected pottery, lithics, shell and glass (Skinner and Fitton 2010, 1).



Figure 1.12. Photograph showing field walking at Khadhima (Skinner and Fitton 2010, 20).

1.3. Research hypothesis

To investigate the proposition that Kuwait's geographical location, as a link between areas within and surrounding the Arabian Gulf, led to near continous settlement from 13000BC to the 18th century AD.

1.3.1. Objectives

In order to demonstrate the hypothesis, this thesis will meet a number of objectives:

- Objective 1: To create for the first time a comprehensive history of Kuwait from it earliest inhabitations in around 13000BC through to the creation of the modern nation state (*c*. 18th century AD). This is timely as Kuwait is

increasing considering World Heritage Site status for some of its archaeological remains.

- Objective 2: To explain how geography has impacted upon the significances of the cultures that have lived in Kuwait.
- Objective 3: To investigate how people and ideas move and the ways in which different social networks (such as exchange), develop and influence what people do.
- Objectives 4: To compare the historical record with the archaeological data to create a deeper understanding of past events.
- Objective 5: To demonstrate that the modern nation state of Kuwait has a historical situated heritage that directly links to the past, that is evident in religion, trade, movement, architecture and landscape change. That the nation state does not exist in isolation, as is currently thought by many in Kuwait, and that it does have prehistoric and historic relations with neighbouring areas.

1.4. Methodology

The methodology includes analysis of the archaeological data from Kuwait, which has been collected by several archaeological expeditions. As a case study, I have conducted an archaeological survey (see Chapter 8), to characterise the different regions and focus upon the material culture. Such analysis incorporates detailed understandings of ceramic technology and typology sequences. In the following chapters, I will review the characteristics (e.g. architecture, social life, and economy) of sites from different periods, with particular consideration of whether they had been continuously occupied from one phase to the next, or whether there were gaps. In doing so, significances will be teased out to develop broader narratives. Where

available, the archaeological data will be compared with the historical, to create richer understandings or to dispute previous assumptions.

I will compare settlement phases in Kuwait in terms of similarities, differences, influences and the spread of features. Where appropriate, I will compare some settlements in Kuwait with nearby sites in the Arabian Gulf.

1.5. Summary

In this chapter I have briefly introduced a number of studies that consider some of the archaeology of Kuwait. In doing so, I have highlighted some chronologies that work with the development of civilisation in the Arabian Gulf region. Furthermore, I have provided an overview of all the archaeological teams which have worked in Kuwait. The following chapters will expand upon these introductions in more detail.

Chapter 2

In this chapter I will point out the importance of the Arabian Gulf. I will consider the origins of the Arabian Gulf; its name, geography and its role in history. This will be combined with discussions on Kuwait's geography and histories, from its earliest beginings through the British presence, on to the invasion by Iraq.

2.1 Importance of the Arabian Gulf

The Arabian Gulf has been called many names through the ages. It has been known as the land of the God or the land of the sea. Also it was named the Lower Sea or Bitter Sea in the Assyrian texts. When Alexander the Great occupied the region in the 4th century BC, he called it the Persian Gulf. In the later centuries, it was known as the Gulf of Basra, by the Ottomans. Also it was called Qatif Gulf by the people who lived in the Eastern region of Arabian Peninsula. Many historians and foreign voyagers called it the Arabian Gulf, such as Ammianus Marcelinus, Pliny and C. Niebuhr (al-Fail 1988, 47-48). This is the term often used today (but not by Iran). Its total area is about 241000 km 2 and its length is about 1000 km. Its latitude is from a maximum of approximately 340 km to a minimum at the Strait of Hormuz of approximately 55 km (see Figure 2.1) (al-Thani 1997, 37). It is bordered from the northeast, and east by Iran (al-Qasmi 2000, 15), and it is bordered from the southeast and south by Oman and the United Arab Emirates, and from the west / southwest by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Both Kuwait and Iraq are bordered by the Arabian Gulf from the northwest, while Bahrain is located surrounded by sea, northwest of Qatar (Benediková 2004).



Figure 2.1. A map showing the Arabian Gulf (Eyre 2009).

2.2 Geography of the Arabian Gulf

On maps, the geographical location sometimes crosses beyond the area of the Straits of Hormuz, and the Gulf of Oman, which is the natural extension of the Arabian Sea. From the Iranian side it is characterised by mountainous coastlines, with heavy slopes, and narrow beaches. The coastal plain expands in the northern part of Iran's Bushihr, and then unites with the delta plains of the rivers Tigris, Euphrates and the Karun (Qal‘aji 1992, 25-35). On the shore of the Arabian Gulf, the slopes are very rare, except in the base of the peninsula of Qatar and far south of the Straits of Hormuz near the Musandam Peninsula (Riyadh 1983, 227-228).

In the past, the Arabian Gulf was often much deeper than today (Rice 2002, 121). Most of the Arabian coast consists of sandy beaches, with many small islands with internal lakes. Waters in the Gulf are relatively shallow and it does experience high waves. Therefore, it provides a good environment for marine navigation. The depths of the Gulf are not, however, all the same; the deepest areas are located along the Iranian coast (al-Heatī 2004, 9).

2.2.1 Climate

The weather of the Arabian Gulf is heavily influenced by the surrounding desert lands. It is characterised by large seasonal fluctuations. The summer is very hot and the winter cool with air temperatures shifting from above 50°C to below zero. The sea water temperatures are various from 36°C to 12°C (al-Heatī 2004, 104-112).

2.2.2 Wind systems in the Arabian Gulf

The Arabian Gulf is characterised by strong northerly winds. It blows in most during the months of June and early July. When the north winds come, the Asian side becomes warm in late May and early June, and there is a low pressure system moving anti clockwise. The winds can continue two or three consecutive days with speeds up 40-50 km/h. The lack of depth in the Gulf leads to rapid fluctuations in water temperature, creating very tight local winds. In general, August is very calm but in early November the effects of air depressions are present, which move from the Mediterranean Sea to the east to create storms. In December another term begins. The strong northerly winds blow and it reaches its maximum intensity in February. The north and the northwest winds are dominating during most of the year. It seems that for ships to benefit most from the wind, they should do so by sailing from the northwest of Mesopotamia to the bottom of the Gulf (Potts 2003a, 81-82).

2.3 History

Since antiquity the Arabian Gulf has been a main trade and marine route between the civilisations of Near East. The Mesopotamia civilisations (between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers), were in the northwest of the Arabian Gulf (al-Fail 1988, 13). Over time, the Arabian Gulf region was a link between ancient east civilisations. For example, in the United Arab Emirates and Oman, the archaeological expeditions have found traces of settlements dating back to 7000BC. In these settlements there have been discovered distinct pieces of pottery which refer to Ubaid culture (Mesopotamia pottery; see Chapter 3). This indicates that exchange trade routes between the different regions in the Gulf were active. The Mesopotamia people and the neighbouring cultures (Persian civilisation) sailed to trade through the Gulf, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea (see Figure 2.2). In spite of the abundance of agricultural products in the region of Mesopotamia, they were in need of other materials, such as, metals, bitumen and shell (see Chapter 3 and 5).

Thus, some sailed through the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers to reach the Arabian Gulf looking for these resources. There are some Sumerian’s texts dated back to 3000BC indicating that they imported copper from the Magan region (Oman today). Furthermore, the Akkadian documents (2000BC) indicate that there were exchange trades between Mesopotamia, Dilmun and Melukha (in Indus Valley) through the Arabian Gulf (Shahian 1997, 14-16).

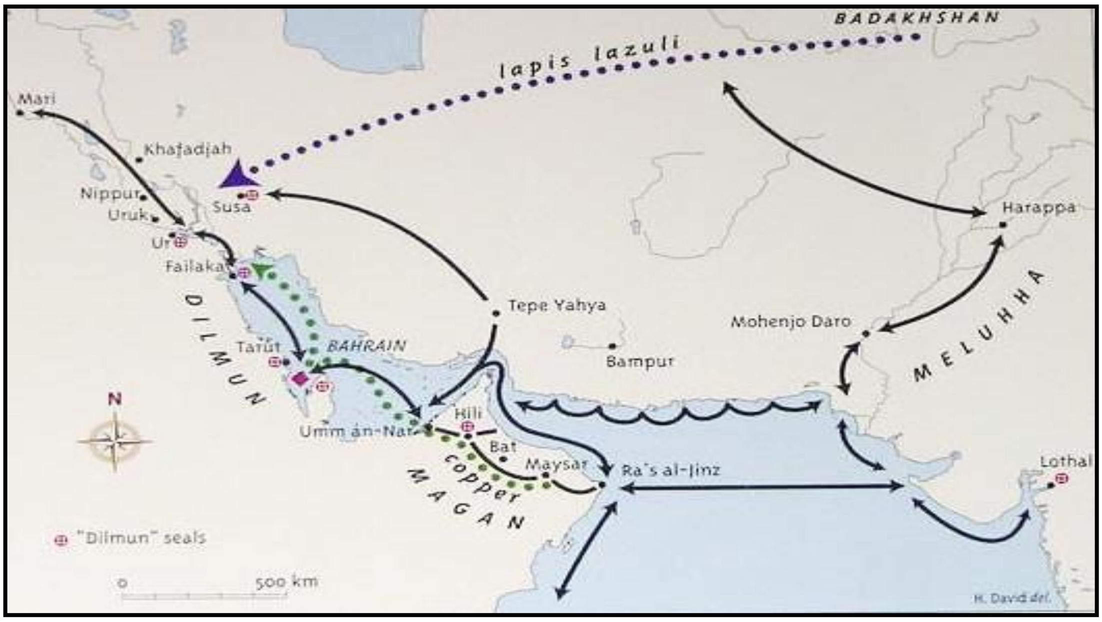


Figure 2.2. Map of possible trade routes (Rice 2002, 382).

The Arabian Gulf was well known as a major source for the pearl trade. The low depth of the waters of the Gulf made it easy for divers to reach the pearls (al-Tamemī 1986, 16-20). In 6th century BC, the Achaemenides established their empire that extended to all parts of the Near East, from the Indus valley to Libya and Macedonia in the north, so they were able to control all the trade routes whether on the seas, such as the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea, or the on the land (Saleem 1989, 501-512).

The Roman occupation of Egypt was in 35BC (Preveden 1955, 33-38). It allowed them to control all the trade routes from the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Many of the cultures in Asia, Africa and Europe established trade relations with them (al-Qasmi 2000, 26; D). For instance, there is archaeological evidence of Roman trade with of the Indian subcontinent at Berenike on the Red Sea (Langenbucher 2001). In addition, an archaeological expedition found large quantities of Roman glass in the al-Dor site in Umm al-Quwain (UAE) (Haerinick 2001, 202-203).

In spite of the Roman control of the trade routes of the Red Sea, the maritime routes of the Gulf was under control of other civilisations such as, the Persains. Thus the Romans eventually invaded Mesopotamia in AD113 to control of all the trade routes, which were leading to Mediterranean Sea (Qal‘aji 1992, 70-71).

In the 7th century AD, the Islamic State controlled the Arabian Gulf. After a hundred years Islam spread east and west and the Indian Ocean effectively became a ‘Muslim lake’, and has been dominated by Arab traders and goods coming from the east especially spices. This led the Islamic State to impose taxes on the ships which were carrying goods to European countries; this resulted in things often being too expensive for the Europeans. Therefore, the European Kingdoms began seriously considering getting rid of the Arabic domination of the trade routes. In the 5th century AD, Vasco de Gama discovered a new route to India by sailing around Africa (Taqūsh 1997, 550-551)

The incoherence of the Islamic States, and later the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, allowed some European powers to compete in order to share the legacy of the Ottoman Empire which stretched from the Arabian Gulf to Morocco in the west, with some European territories north of the Mediterranean Sea. This was called the period of European colonisation. Initially, the Portuguese arrived at the Arabian Gulf then the British Empire dominated the region. The British colonisation continued until the 20th century then the Arabian Gulf was liberated (al-Fail 1988, 72-90). During the 20th century, large quantities of oil have been discovered in the Arabian Gulf, becoming a source energy and assiting with political influences. Therefore, the importance of the Arabian Gulf has increased to be one of the most significant areas in the world (al-Tamemī 1986, 27-29). For example, during Gulf War II, most of the modern world had united against Iraq's ambitions to control of the Arabian Gulf oil.

2.4 The geography of Kuwait

Kuwait is an Arabic country situated in the northwest corner of the Arabian Gulf. Its latitude is about 28 to 30 north, and longitude is 46 to 48 east; and it is bordered by Iraq to the north, Saudi Arabia to the south and west, and the Arabian Gulf to the east. Its area is approximately 17, 800 km² (al-Jawharī and Darwīsh 1992, 68).

Kuwait does not really experience varied climates, just a high temperature in the summer and a cold temperature in the winter (Sharaf 1977, 51-17). The surface is covered by a thin layer of sand. Generally, Kuwait is a flat and sandy area, covered by gravel and has some hills descending gradually from the west to the east (al-Jawharī and Darwīsh 1992, 69). It has nine islands, Bubyan is the largest of them, Failaka is the only island to have been populated in modern times, Akkaz, Warba, Miskan, Uha, Kuber, Qaru and Umm al-Maradem (Hajjāwī 1996, 22). I will detail here the history, geography and economy of Failaka Island, because most of the archaeological sites in Kuwait found on it.

2.4.1 The geography of Failaka Island

Failaka was populated until the Iraq invasion of 1990, after which time people left and did not return; many of the remaining houses were destroyed by Gulf War II (Salem 2006, 289). Failaka Island has the most archaeological sites in Kuwait, beginning in the Bronze Age reaching to the modern period. It is located on the west coast of the Arabian Gulf, off Kuwait Bay, approximately 19km from the Ras al-Ardh port on the Kuwait mainland (see Figures 2.3 and 2.4). Ras-Sabbiyah is the closest point on the mainland to the island which is only approximately 12.7km away (al-Mutairi 2010, 12). Failaka Island is relatively small and triangular shaped (Salem 2006, 11). The length of the island is approximately 20km and its width 6.5km, and the estimated area of the island is around 44km (al-Failakāwī 2000, 13).



Figure 2.3. Kuwait Map showing Failaka Island (Gharbiah 1989, 15).

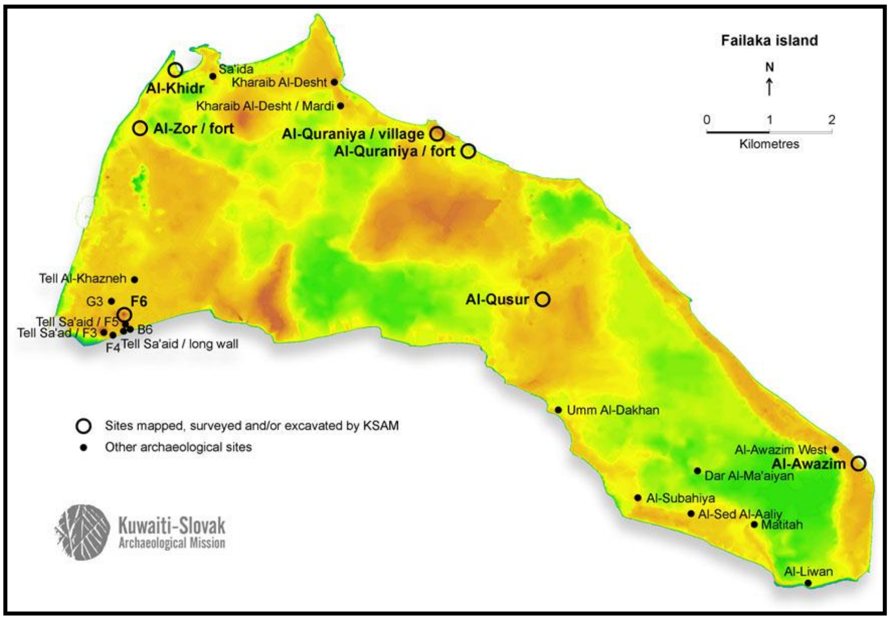


Figure 2.4. Archaeological sites in Failaka Island (Benediková 2008, 12).

The island is a flat land and the highest point is in the Shabaikā hills that reach up to approximately 7m. The island is characterised by shallow water. The tidal movements on the island create natural basins that are appropriate for docking, such as at Dohat Sa‘idā Port and al-Khidr Port (Mustafa 1988, 76-9).

The fertile land of Failaka Island consists of limestone with sand covering about 75% of the island (Mustafa 1988, 92-102). The climate of the island is similar

to Kuwait’s, where the weather is cold in the winter and the temperature range is 8-18 C˚, while the temperature rises in the summer up to 25-45 C˚. The movement of the wind is influenced by the northwest winds that are active throughout the year, and then by the southeast wind. Rainfall is relatively low and normally occurs in the winter only (al-Kūlayb 1990, 10-12, 75). As for the source of water on the island, it relies on rain and wells. Since records have begun ships have stopped to supply water from the ports of the island (al-Mutairi 2010, 14). According to Sumerian sources, the water was sacred and this is the place of the god of water, known as the Enki (Salem 2006, 10). Even in modern periods (e.g. 18th century AD) with the emergence of the State of Kuwait, Kuwait City was supplied with water from Failaka Island (Lorimer 1970, 1509). Al-Shamlan (1986a) stated that Failaka Island has many fresh wells (see Figure 2.5), such as, al-Mamzer, al-Jaryan, al-Naser, al-Mutaitah, Dar Um Salem, al-Quraniya, Sa‘ida Village, Khara’ib Dhasht and Bu Guba'ah well (al-Failakāwī 2000, 19-25).

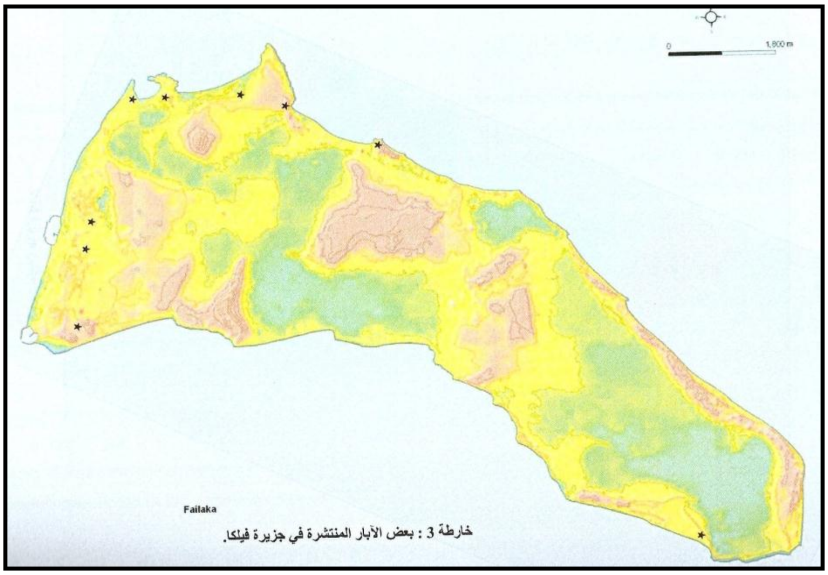


Figure 2.5. Map showing some well locations in Failaka Island as indicated by black dots (al-Mutairi 2010, 247).

A brief history of Failaka Island

Failaka was mentioned in many ancient sources, and perhaps the most famous one is by the Greek voyager Strabo (64BC - AD21); he borrowed most of the description from Eratosthenes who was a geographer living in the 3rd century BC. Strabo stated that when Alexander the Great returned from the Indus land, he demanded that his naval commander, Nearchos, return to Babylon by sea in order to identify the Arabian Gulf coast. The commander, when he returned to Alexander the Great, mentioned the Island at the mouth of the Euphrates (Shatt al-Arab) and Alexander named it 'Ikaros' (Calvet 1983, 21-2).

Arrian, in AD170, wrote about the campaign of Alexander the Great and stated that there were two islands away from the mouth of the Euphrates. The first one was away from the Euphrates by approximately 120 stadiums (an ancient Greek measurement: 1 stadium = 185m) and this island was covered by types of trees and had a temple for the goddess Artemis and its people took care of the temple. They herded wild goats, which were not allowed to be hunted except to sacrifice them to Artemis gods. Arrian attributed the name of Ikaros to Alexander as there was an island located on the Aegean Sea called Ikaros also. The second one was Tylos, which is Bahrian Island (Calvet 1983, 26-7).

The name was possibly formulated from the name of a famous temple of the island of Failaka, which was the Ichara temple, in the first half of the first millennium BC (Glassner 1983, 47; Gharbiah and al-Najjar 1990, 118-9). This has not been found so far, but the strong similarities between the name of the temple and the Greek name make this possible (Rice 2002, 304; Potts 2003a, 928-932).

The Danish archaeological team began its excavations on Failaka Island in 1957-1963. The team discovered in the Hellenistic fort site F5, engraved sand stone with Greek writing consisting of 44 lines, which was a message from one of the Seleucsid rulers, who perhaps was Seleucus II (246 - 226BC), to Ikadion who was one of the Khuzestan leaders. The latter sent it to the Failaka Island Governor Anaxarchos to regulate activities on the island. This inscription confirmed the Ikaros name of Failaka Island (Jeppesen 1989, 103). There are no indications for the name of the island before the Hellenistic period, but Glassner (1983) reported that there is a possibility that the name ‘Agarum’, which was found inscribed on a piece of stone, may have been formulated from the word ‘Akarum‘, and perhaps the Greeks changed it to Ikaros.

The name of Ichara mentioned in the map of the Arabian Peninsula and the Arabian Gulf region, dates to AD150 (al-Ghunaim 1992, 12). During subsequent centuries, the name of the island was not mentioned in the historical and geographical sources until the 17th century AD, during the presence of the Portuguese in the Arabian Gulf, who refer to it as ‘il ya de Aguada’, which means ‘Well Island‘. On this point, al-Mutairi (2010) reported that in the beginning of AD1000 perhaps the boats developed and became much bigger, therefore they needed deeper water. For this reason the route may have been changed and the name of Failaka Island neglected. As for the current name of Failaka, or by local pronunciation Failacha, it was mentioned as Peluche on a map drawn by Thornton, AD1716, who was a British pilot. It may be that he formulated this name from the local name (Slot 2003. 95). The local name Failacha may have been formulated from ‘Falach’ which means ‘water channel’, and there is a possibility that there was a water channel exposed during a drought in Failaka Island (Salem 1985, 14).

The economies of Failaka Island

Failaka is an island and links to the outside world by boat. The vital role of this island was in its commercial abilities. However, the information associated with the commercial activity of the island is limited, and most dates back to the prehistoric period. Failaka has been identified as a transit station in the Arabian Gulf during the second millennium BC. This interpretation is supported by the archaeology as there is evidence of pottery from Mesopotamia, Iran, Oman and the Indus Valley (Hojlund1987, 11-2; see Chapter 5). Signs indicate to the continuation of the island as a trading station during the first millennium BC, despite the collapse of the second millennium BC settlements (see Chapters 5 and 6). The information derived from archaeological sites, such as the Governor's Palace and the Temple Tower, Tell al-Khazna and the Hellenistic fort, promotes the commercial role which has been played by the island between Mesopotamia and southern Arabian Gulf (al-Mutairi 2010, 31).

Archaeological evidence of the Islamic period is available through the al-Qusur site (see Chapters 7 and 8). In this site, stones from the date fruit (*Phoenix dactylifera*) have been found, which indicates that residents practiced agricultural activity; and pottery relating to Mesopotamia, pieces imported from the southern Arabian Gulf, and pieces imported from Iran and China were found (al-Mutairi 2010, 32).

Generally Failaka Island is characterised by fertile land and wells, which paved the way for the emergence of agricultural communities. There is evidence on the island that indicates that some people may have been planting palm trees since 1500BC (Conwy 1987, 181-3). In al-Qusur site, there are Christain and Islamic settlements that are surrounded with low fences with doors, wells and cisterns of

water, indicating an agricultural land (al-Mutairi 2010, 32; Callot and Calvet 1999, 7; see also Chapters 7 and 8).

In the modern periods, Abu- Hakma (1970) reported that the people of Failaka Island never exceeded 150 persons distributed in about 70-80 houses, mostly owning sailing ships, small fishing boats and some cattle. They were planting palm trees, onion, watermelon, and a little wheat. Lorimer (1970) stated that Failaka Island had 70-80 average-sized boats, small fishing boats, palm trees, and planted wheat, barley, and some vegetables, such as onions, carrots and radishes during the late 20th century. Regarding grazing, the oldest known text is Greek, in which Arrian mentioned the inhabitants of the island caring for wild goats, which were sacrificed to the god (Calvet 1983, 21-2). At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a historical text that mentioned the island contained 12 camels, a number of donkeys, cows and sheep. There were poultry and a few wild deer, which were owned by the Kuwaiti Royal Family (Lorimer 1970, 793). All the other evidence is derived from archaeological sites; for example, al-Khidr site has some cattle bones, sheep, goats and deer (Barta 2008, 126). It is likely that people living on Failaka Island have practiced fishing since prehistoric times. In the Sa'ida site, three weights of fishing nets and several pieces of fish bones were found (al-Failakāwī 2000, 65).

The Kuwaiti shoreline is a model for all of the topographic features known to the Arabian Gulf. Although it has limited shores, which is in the region of 170km, there are several types of coast, which usually prevail in the Arabian Gulf shores. There are sandy beaches, flat muddy shores and rocky coasts. In additional, there are creeks and coral reef islands (al-Mutar 2003, 22). There are some Sabkhas, which are salty flats, (al-Shaikh 1992, 19) which contain several plants, such as Nitraria, at-tanan and al-Trafa (al-Mutar *et al*. 2003, 22).

2.4.2 Kuwait hills:

Jal-al-Zur is the most important hill. It is a vertical rocky edge located in the north of Kuwait, overlooking Kuwait Bay from the northwest bank (see Figure 2.6). Its height is approximately 145m. There are al-Liyah hills which are located to the west of Jal al-Zur. Its height is approximately 125m. Then there are Kera'a al-Marū hills which are located south of al-Liyah hills, with a height of approximately 183m. Also there is Tell Warā, located in the south of Kuwait city and has a height of approximately 30.5m, and the Ma‘adanyat hills, which are located in the northwest of Ahmadi city, which is located in the south of Kuwait city. Its height is about of 53m (Sultan and Fayyad 1993, 56-57).

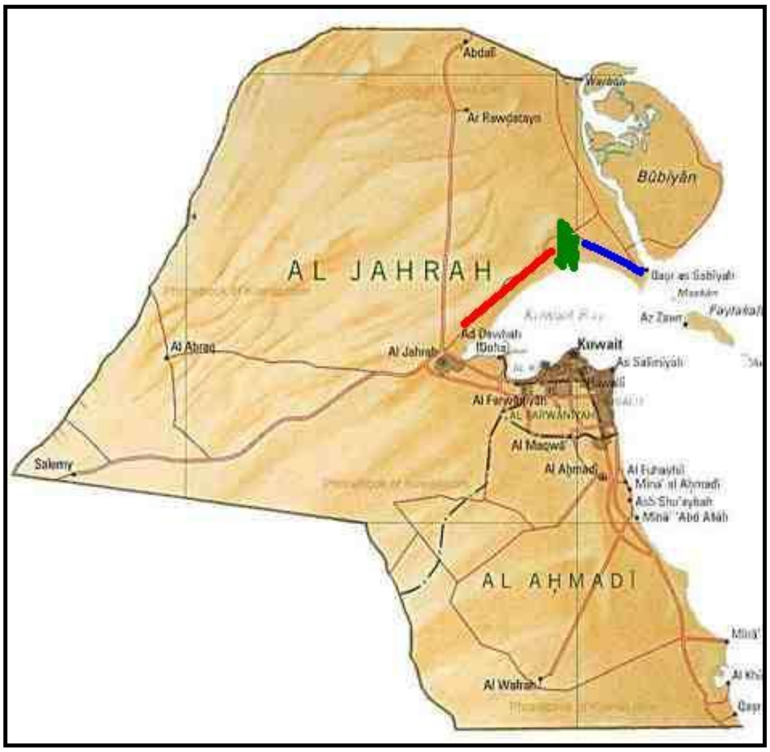


Figure 2.6. Map of Kuwait indicating Jal al-Zur in red (Swideg 2010).

2.4.3 Lowlands

There are many lowlands in Kuwait such as, al-Rawdhatayn, Umm al-‘Aish and Umm al-Rimam (see Figures 2.7 and 2.8). Kuwait’s surface also has ponds spread on the limestone areas (Sultan and Fayyad 1993, 60).



Figure 2.7. Photograph showing the north part of Umm al-Rimam lowland (Misak, Mahfud, and al-Asfur 2003, 80).



Figure 2.8. Photograph showing Umm al-‘Aish lowland (Misak, Mahfud, and al-Asfur 2003, 80).

2.4.4 Valleys

Kuwait has a group of dry and shallow valleys which run from southwest to northeast in the same trend of the Kuwait surface decline. Some of them move to the lowlands such as al-Rawdhatayn, Umm al-‘Aish and Burgan plain, or descend to the east towards Sabbiyah creek, or to the Arabian Gulf in the south of the State of Kuwait (al-Duweesh 2010a, 9).

2.4.5 Wadi Al Batin:

It is located in the west part of Kuwait. It extends from the southwest towards the northeast, with a width of about 7-10km and a depth of about of 57m. Its length is about 75km (al-Baz and al-Sarāwī 2000, 20).

2.4.6 Plains:

Al-Gar‘a plain, it extends from the southern border of Kuwait, parallel to the shoreline, to al-Jahra city. It does not have any features accept al-Surra. Its high level from the coast to the mainland is about 0-50m. Adan plain, it begins from the south of al-Gar‘a plain and extends to the southern borders of Kuwait. It also starts from the shoreline in the east towards the al-Debdebā plain in the west. It has a few hills, such as Warā and al-Qebab. al-Debdebā plain, it is located in the southwest of al-Jahra city and extends to the west part of Kuwait. It has many dry valleys. The lowland, which is located between Adan plain and al-Debdebā, is called al-Shaq. Northern Plains, it is a plain that extends from al-Jahra city to the Kuwait- Iraq border. It includes the territories of Umm al-‘Aish and al-Rowdhatain (Dickson 1995, 49-84).

2.4.7 Sabbiyah region

Sabbiyah is a very important area which has many archaeological sites that have been recently discovered. It is located in the northwest of Kuwait Bay. It is a group of hills overlooking the sea coast, bordered to the south by Kuwait Bay and Ras Sabbiyah, and to the west by Jal al-Zur Mountains, and to the north and to the northwest by Bubyan Creek. Jal al-Zur Mountains extend about 65km adjacent to the northern coast of the State of Kuwait. Its height is up to 125m consisting of sandstone and limestone dating back between Holocene and Miocene. The area to the west and northwest, the Jal al-Zur Mountains, are characterised by a descending surface towards some lowlands, which have accumulated sediments (al-Baz and al-Sarāwī 2000, 11).

2.4.8 Kuwait Bay

Kuwait Bay is a big creek located in the middle of the Kuwait coast that is crescent shaped (Dicskon 1995, 22). Its length is about 12km. Its width extends from its entrance at about 18km and about 2.5km from the west, while its depth range is approximately 20m. Kuwait Bay’s surface in general is a sandy plain with some hills. It gradually declines from west to east (Lorimer 1970, 1303-1304).

Multi-sites have been found on the shorelines and islands of this bay; even today, the capital of Kuwait is located on the coast of the bay. There are many factors that make it a very important bay, such as the strategic location near settlements in the Arabian the Gulf; it has natural ports and navigation shores; it has access to fresh water; is located between the trade routes, and has abundant sources of fish (al-Duweesh 2010a, 13).

2.5 Kuwait in the historical references

2.5.1 Islamic references

Kuwait has been mentioned in many Islamic historical references but with different names, such as Kathema or Kadhima (see Chapter 8). Kadhima is located in the northeast of Arabian Peninsula and in the west part of Kuwait Bay. The geographic location of this country had an important role in the trade routes, whether via the sea or the land. It effectively became the link point between Mesopotamia, Persia and Asia Minor (Anatolia), the middle Arabian Peninsula and Bīlad al-Shām (al-Duweesh 2005, 12-15).

This country has been reported by a number of historians; for instance, al-Hamāwī, who lived in the 10th century AD, mentioned Kadhima in his book as being located in the northwest Arabian Gulf (al- Hamāwī 1995, 346-347). Also, Abu Abdullah al-Bakrī who lived in AD900 also mentioned Kadhima as a centre of trade between the north and the south Arabian Peninsula (al- Bakrī 1998, 88). Al- Asfahānī, reported that one of the kings of Hira had built palace for his daughter in the Kadhima city (al-Asfahānī 1967, 320-321). In addition, Abu al-Fida who lived in AD700 reported that Kadhima city was a well- known coastal city between Basra (in Iraq) and Qatif in the eastern Arabia. An important battle between Muslims and Persians, termed the Dhāt al-Salāsil battle or Kadhima Day, happened in Kadhima land during the 7th century AD; however, in this battle the Muslims defeated the Persians according to many Islamic sources. Therefore, this place still has significant importance for many Muslims today (al-Tabarī 1993, 552-554).

2.5.2. European references

Kuwait state has also been reported by a number of European sources during the 18th and 19th centuries AD. These were through the travellers who visited Kuwait, and

mentioned Kadhima (see Chapter 8) or Qurain, which were the names of an ancient Kuwait. Some of these maps are illustrated below which demonstrates the Arab Gulf and the location of Kuwait (Kadhima or Qurain) (al-Ghunaim 1992, 49). For example: C. Niebuhr who was a German voyageur visited Kuwait in 1760 and drew a map showing Kuwait's location (see Figure 2.9).

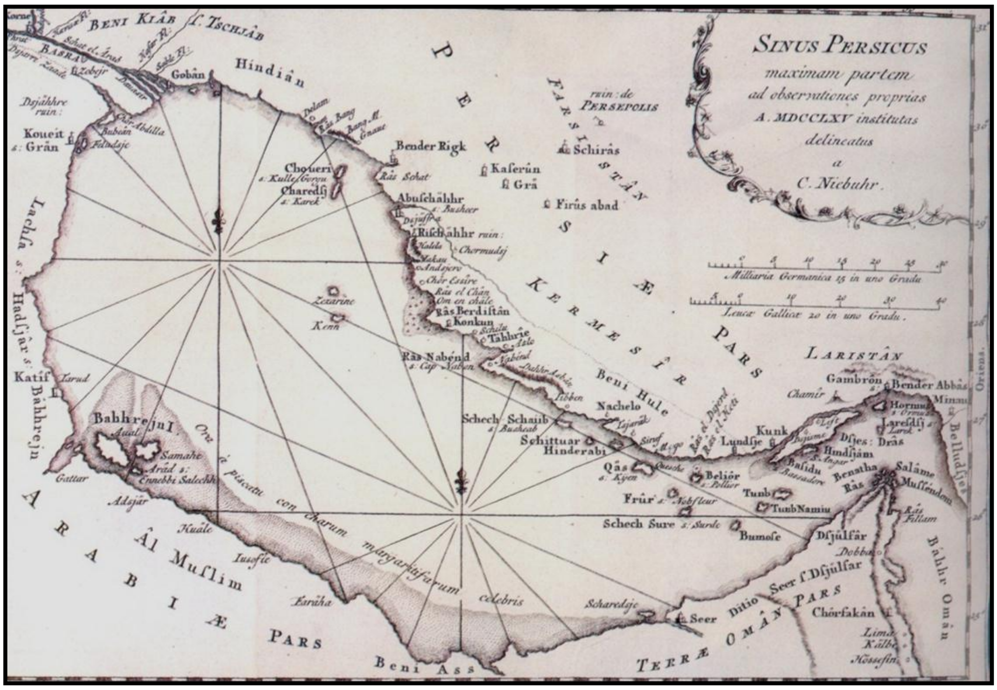


Figure 2.9. This map drawn by C. Niebuhr in 1760 (al-Ghunaim, 1992, 49).

James Silk Buckingham was a voyager from the United Kingdom, who visited Kuwait in 1816, and described it as a great port in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula with the Kuwaiti people being good commercial workers (Abu-Hakma 1986, 14). Mignan was another voyager from the United Kingdom who worked in the East India Company in Bombay (Mumbai). This company was owned by the British government during the 19th century AD. He described the Utub countries (Kuwait and Bahrain) and their occupants (Abu-Hakma 1986, 16). Lewis Pelly from the United Kingdom, who worked in the East India Company and visited Kuwait in 1865, described the

Kuwait country and how the Kuwaiti prince dealt with his people in court, and customs during the month of Ramadan (al-Sabah 1988, 76). Below, I will illustrate some of different maps which mentioned Kuwait (Kadhima or Grain).



Figure 2.10. Map drawn by A.B. Bourghi with Italian writing under the title of "Supplemento Alle Carte d'Asia Ed Africa". It was first published in France in 1818, where it shows Koueit, O Grian (al-Ghunaim 1992, 63).



Figure 2.11. Map issued by British War Office in 1924, reprinted in 1939 showing modern Kuwait (al-Ghunaim 1992. 143).

2.6. Kuwait brief history

Kuwait is located in the west bank on the Arabian Gulf and on the overland trade route between Oman and Mesopotamia (see Figure 2.12). Kuwait played an important role in maritime transportation, whether via cultural exchange or international trade (Abu-Hakma 1984, 13). Archaeological sites, discovered in the Kuwait, highlight the significance of these transportations and exhanges (see all Chapters here).



Figure 2.12. Photograph Showing Kuwait archaeology sites (al-Duweesh 2003, 148).

Evidence suggests that Kuwait is one of the earliest occupied regions of the Near East. For example, flints dating from the Neolithic (*c*. 8000 – 5000BC) have been found in Sulabikhat (Hajjāwī 1996, 15). Moreover, Ubaid culture remains (5300 - 3500BC) have been found at H3 in Sabbiyah (Carter and Crawford 1999, 43; see Chapter 3). Furthermore, there are settlements dating back to the Bronze Age (2400 - 1200BC) such as Dilmun cluture (al-Bader 1974, 108; see Chapter 5). Ancient documents from Mesopotamia (listing some of the objects received during the Dilmun), illustrates Failaka Island as a vital maritime link, through which products from Mulukha, which is located in the Indus Valley, and Magan (Oman) were exported to Mesopotamia (Hajjāwī 2001, 50).

Prominance as a trading point waned by the end of the second millennium BC. The area regained its former significance, by the Hellenistic period (330 - 130BC) when the Greeks constructed a fortress there (see Chapter 6). Then they gave the island name Ikarose, meaning *happy land* (Hajjāwī 2001, 52).

The maritime trading from the east to Europe through the Arabian Gulf transformed The Red Sea (Abu-Hakma 1986, 89). With respect to the Partho-Sasanian remains (248BC - AD637), its existence in the area appears to have been unimportant, because there are just a few ceramic fragments of the culture found, and a few small statues found in Tell al-Khazna in the Failaka Island (Hajjāwī 1996, 24; see Chapter 6). Concerning the Christians in Failaka Island, the extent of occupations are unclear, since the structural remains of a church found on the al-Qusur site have still not been firmly dated. The existence of engraved crosses, which were found in the church, are most probably from the 5th or 6th century AD (see discussions in Chapter 7). The ceramic fragments found are dated to the 6th and 9th centuries AD (Hajjāwī 1996, 17).

Some Arab tribes such as, Bakr bin Wa'il and Tamim, settled on the west coast of the Arabian Gulf during the beginning of the 7th century AD. The archaeological remains in some sites such as, Wadi al-Batin and Kadhima indicate that Kuwait was on the caravan trade route between the south and the north of the Arabian Gulf (al-Duweesh 2005, 11-15). Banu Khalid tribe dominates of the Eastern of the Arbian Gulf from Qater to Basra during 16th century AD. This tribe continued to rule this region until the end of 18th century AD and it has maintained the trade routes. Due to increased peace and stability in these areas, the other tribes were attracted, such as Utub tirbe. The Utub tribe, who came from Najd region (being a part of the Eneza tribe), moved to the Eastern of Arabian Peninsula and settled in Qatar in the 17th

century AD. Eventually, they moved to the north and founded the Kuwait Emirate in the second half of 17th century AD (al-Resheed 1978, 107). In 1752, Sabah Bin Jabr was elected as the first ruler of Kuwait and the establisher of al-Sabah family who are now ruling the State of Kuwait (Abu-Hakma 1984, 27). Kuwait therefore has the first democracy in the Arbian Gulf. I will demonstrate in this thesis how this is in part a result of historical and geographical occurances (see Chapters 8 and 9).

European countries eventually began to send expeditions to the Arabian Gulf to dominate the trade routes. The Portuguese were the first arrivals to the Arabian Gulf in 16th century AD, followed by the Dutch and the British. That the Arabian Gulf was under the control of the Ottomans, resulted in conflict **(**Abu-Hakma 1984, 46-48). By the second half of 18th century AD, the British became the largest power in the Arabian Gulf (al-Sabah 1988, 18-20**).** Kuwait was developed as a large trade fleet by the end the 19th century AD, trading directly with India. This meant that Muscat (Capital of Oman), Bushihr (in Iran) and other ports in the Arabian Gulf could be by-passed. Kuwait is also located on the caravan trade routes, making it a major station for exporting and inporting with India (al-Sabah 1988, 118-123).

2.6.1. Kuwait during the British presence

The internal stability and good external relations maintained by Kuwait allowed it to remain fairly independent of the prevalent powers at the time such as, the British and Ottomans. In the period of Mubarak al-Sabah (1896-1915), the threatening of the Ottomans became more dangerous (al-Khatrash 1985, 65-66). Thus he signed a treaty with the British in 1899, which allowed the British control over Kuwait’s foreigner affairs. This resulted in Kuwait retaining security without losing sovernity (al-Sabah 1988, 21).

As commerce developed Kuwait's economy in general, its rulers began a comprehensive development in all fields. In the beginning of the 20th century AD, Kuwaiti now had more than 800 large and small boats, as a direct outcome of trade prosperity. In 1938, oil was found in trade quantities, but extraction stopped during World War II (al-Khususī 1972, 223, 346). The first shipment of the oil was exported in 1946 in the Ahmed al-Jabr reign (1921-1950). A year after the end of World War II oil became the main source of revenue **(**Dickson 1995, 699-700). In the reign of Sheikh Abdullah al-Salem (1950-1965), the Kuwaiti and the British treaty was completed in 1961, and Kuwait gained full independence. Kuwait joined to the Arab League in 1961 and of the United Nation in 1963 (al-Sabah 1988, 457).

2.6.2. Iraq invasion

On August 2nd 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait. The Iraqi government alleged that Kuwait was a part of Iraq (al-Ghunaim 1996, 15). I briefly highlight how the Iraqi army destroyed some of the archaeology of Kuwait.

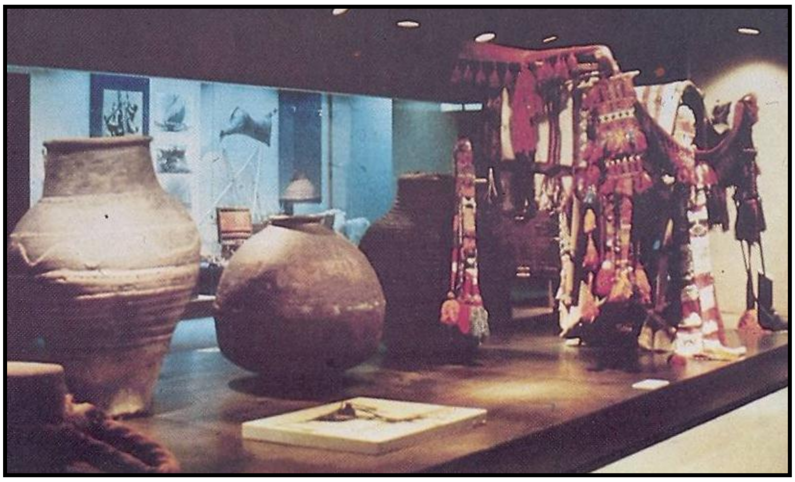


Figure 2.13. A view gallery in the Kuwait National Museum before the Iraqi invasion (Department of Antiquity and Museum 1993, 4).



Figure 2.14. The exhibit galleries of the Kuwait National Museum destroyed and burnt by the invading Iraqi army (Department of Antiquity and Museum 1993, 5).

Kuwait National Museum:

Building No: 1

This building housed a temporary exhibition of the archaeological and ethnographic collections, as well as textual documents and arts (see Figures 2.13 and 2.14). The ground floor gallery consisted of the archaeological collections which contained finds excavated on Kuwait’s mainland and islands. The objects represented a variety of historical periods: the Mesolithic, the Bronze Age, and the Hellenistic and Islamic periods. The gallery also included donated antiquities from other Arab States (Department of Antiquity and Museum 1993, 4-5).

The ethnographic section of the gallery demonstrated the different traditions in Kuwait: the maritime tradition was presented by pearl fishing tools, models of various types of sailing ships, as well as, fishing tools. The urban section featured furnishings of a Kuwaiti house, national costumes and jewellery, musical instruments and writing tools. The Bedouin tradition was represented by tent furnishing and Bedouin weaving which forms a source of revenue in the desert life (Department of Antiquity and Museum 1993, 6-7).



Figure 2.15. A view of gallery exhibiting works for the contemporary Kuwaiti artists (Department of Antiquity and Museum 1993, 6).



Figure .2.16. A picture showing the same gallery of the exhibiting works for the contemporary Kuwaiti artists after having been burnt and destroyed by an invading army (Department of Antiquity and Museum 1993, 7).

The gallery on the first floor had texts and a selection of works by modern Kuwaiti artists from 1954 onwards (see Figures 2.15 and 2.16). The gallery contained oil and water paintings, carved wooden panels, and bronze sculpture. This selection represented the history of modern art in Kuwait from its beginning to 1990 (Department of Antiquity and Museum 1993).



Figure 2.17. Photograph showing a base of a Hellenistic column after destruction (Department of Antiquity and Museum 1993, 8).

During the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Iraqi army stole the Museum of Antiquity's books, furniture and equipment. Such removal and destruction countered the claims by the Iraqi government that antiquities were being transferred in order to be saved and preserved. For instance, many antiquities in the galleries such as, a Greek column and Bronze Age ceramic jars were found burnt and damaged (see Figure 2.17). Furthermore, the entire collection of the artistic works, including oil painting, bronze, marble and porcelain figurines were found burnt and oxidised. A number of ancient texts and manuscripts were also found burnt. They were not transferred to Baghdad as claimed by the Iraqis, but deliberately burnt by the army before its withdrawal from Kuwait in February 1991 (al-Ghunaim 1996, 21-23).

Building No. 2

Dar al-Athar al-Islamiya

The Museum of Islamic Art known as-Dar al-Athar al-Islamiya - housed the private Islamic collection owned by Princess Hussah al-Sabah who introduced their collections as a permanent credit to the State of Kuwait in 1983. The structure contained ten galleries and a specialised library. The galleries consisted antiquities of great historical, artistic and aesthetic value which were organised in chronological series. The prize piece in the collection, was a double page from a Qur'an manuscript, dates back to the 7th century AD (al-Sabah 1983).

The exhibits were arranged in galleries, according to historical periods: Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Ayyubid, Mamluk, Sleucid, il-Khanid, Timurid, Safavid, Ottoman and Mogul Indian. Dar al-Athar al-Islamiya included several types of Islamic artefacts comprising of manuscripts ceramic, glassware, woodwork, carpets, and jewellery. Artefacts represented the arts ranging from Islamic Spain in the west, to turkey in the north, and Yemen in the south (al-Sabah 1983).

The library housed around 7000 books as well as catalogues, periodicals and rare manuscripts. This building was pillaged and damaged during the Iraqi occupation (see Figures 2.18 and 2.19). The Iraqi army under the orders of their government stole the antiquities on display and those reserved in the storage as well as the library, the tools and the furniture. It has been suggested that the Iraqi army deliberately set the structure on fire in order to obliterate the culture of Kuwait (al-Sabah 1983).

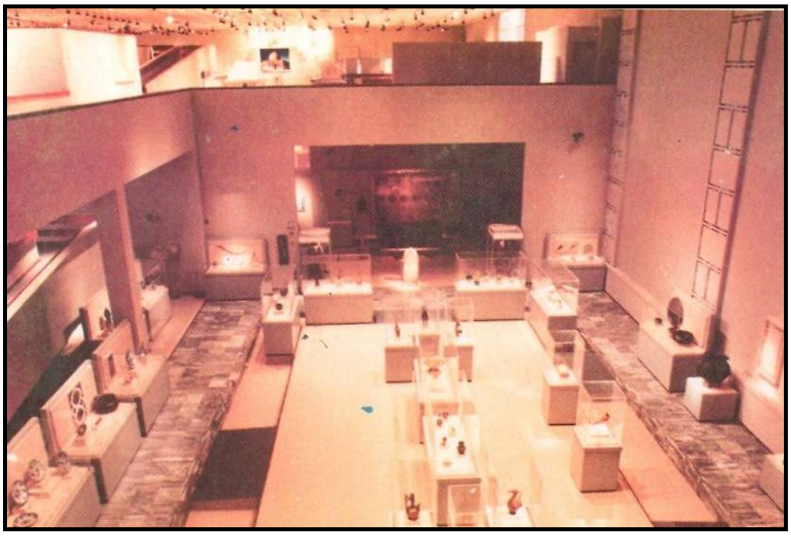


Figure 2.18. Photograph showing a gallery in Dar al-Athar al-Islamiya before the Iraqi invasion (Department of Antiquity and Museum 1993, 10).



Figure 2.19. Photograph showing a gallery in Dar al-Athar al-Islamiya after the Iraqi invasion (Department of Antiquity and Museum 1993, 11).

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Boom Al-Muhallab

This sailing boat used to be located on the sea front outside al-Muhallab was built in 1937 by Kuwaiti ship- builders. This boat was used on trading trips to India, Yemen and East Africa. In 1949, the ship ended its sea voyages. In the 1960s, its owner (the al-Ghanim family) gave it to the State. In 1971, it became the possession of the Department of Antiquities and Museum and was kept in front of the Shuwaikh high school. In 1983, when the Kuwait National Museum was opened, Al-Muhallab was moved to the museum's front courtyard overlooking the Gulf (Gharbiah 1989, 138; see Figure 2.20). The invading Iraqi troops deliberately set the al-Muhallab ship on fire. Nothing of this boat was left except ashes and some scattered damaged parts (see Figure. 2.21).



Figure 2.20. Photograph showing al-Muhallab boat before the Iraqi invasion (Department of Antiquity and Museum 1993, 14).



Figure 2.21. Photograph showing al-Muhallab boat which was completely destroyed by the Iraqi army (Department of Antiquity and Museum 1993, 15).

The archaeology at Failaka Island during Iraqi invasion

The archaeological sites at Failaka Island did not escape destruction by the Iraqi invasion – for instance, trenches were dug through archaeological features to allow military tanks to take strategic positions (see Figure 2.22) (Habīb 1991, 84).

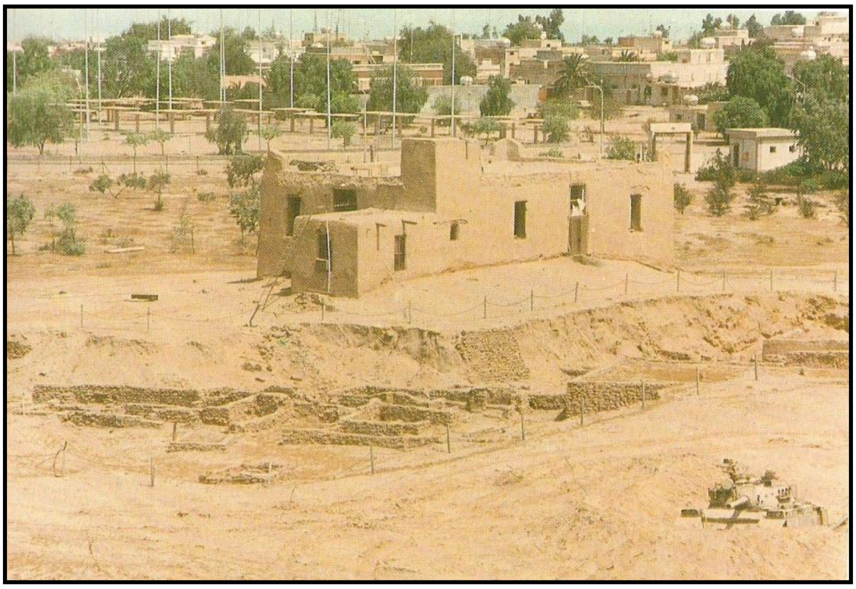


Figure 2.22. Photograph showing the Heritage Museum and archaeology site with military tank during the Iraqi invasion (Habīb 1991, 84).

2.7. Summary

Here, I considered to the importance of the Arabian Gulf with the natural features of Kuwait, the historical sources, the history of modern Kuwait and the invasion of Iraq to give general introduction to the richness of Kuwait.

Chapter 3

3.1 The prehistory of Kuwait

Who were the first settlers in Kuwait? Did people from Mesopotamia, such as those represented by the Ubaid culture, migrate or was it just their material culture that moved? What was the significance of local objects as opposed to more exotic ones? Were political, economic and social relationships established, and if so, when did this first happen? Did people in the Arabian Gulf share a similar ethnic origin? Were the first settlements permanent or more seasonal? In addressing these questions, this chapter will introduce prehistoric sites that are located in the State of Kuwait. In addition, I will focus on the Ubaid culture, which is a key society that developed in Mesopotamia (5300 - 3500BC), and compare its sites there with those in Kuwait. Furthermore, I will examine the distributions of the Ubaid culture in several regions such as, Syria, Iran and the Eastern Arabian Peninsula. All these will demonstrate that Kuwait was one of the earliest places that humans settled in the Near East.

The earliest evidence for human action in Kuwait begins in the Mesolithic (13000 - 8000BC; al-Wohaibi 1996, 25) from Burgan. Most of the tools discovered were made of stone, flint and chert for instance, and they were used for hunting, fishing, and other daily purposes. There are also examples of tools being made of wood, bone, shell and the antler of animals. As with life today, settlements would have been influenced by many diverse factors, such as the climate and social pressure, which influence the rhythms of life (Amer 2010, 37).

Dickson (1997), the British political agent in Kuwait at the beginning of the last century, found stones in Wadi al-Batin dating back to what he referred to as the late Stone Age. Flint was also found at Burgan, dated to the Neolithic period.

Potts (2003a) argued that Kuwait now needs a new methodological approach as most of Kuwait remains unexplored.

Evidence suggests that some of the Kuwaiti islands were populated in prehistoric times. Clayton (1983) found flint tools in Wadi al-Batin dating back to the Neolithic period. Carter (1972) states that the lithic tools collected from the Burgan hills date back to the Mesolithic. Carter and Crawford (2001) found that the decoration of tools and shells in the H3 site reflects the economic life of the people who lived in the sixth millennium BC. The evidence to date is proving to be an archaeological attraction, enticing international teams to explore further.

3.1.1 Mesolithic: 13000 - 8000BC

This period is characterised by tools made of stone that has been fractured, being both small and medium in size. They were mostly used for hunting birds and small animals. Kuwait currently only has one site which reflects this period (Hajjāwī 2001, 39). Compared to neighbouring regions, it appears to be sparsely settled, but this is probably as a direct result of the low research input to date. The increase in archaeological investigation over the last 20 years is beginning to redress this situation, as I will demonstrate in this chapter.

Burgan

The Burgan site is positioned in the south of Kuwait, in the Burgan Oil field. This site was surveyed by H. R. P Dickson, his wife and Mr Sass in 1939. They collected flints, flakes, scrapers, microlithic blades, and burin/gravers dated to the Mesolithic 13000-8000BC. Some of these finds are available at the British Museum, London, and another group is on display at The Oriental Institute, Chicago (Howard 1972, 14). A few flints have been found on an Islamic site, called Kadhima, which is located in northern Kuwait dating to the 6th century AD. Fieldwork has discovered several Mesolithic sites in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula (Amer 2010, 42), for example, al-Wusail site which is located on the eastern coast of Qatar (see Figure 3.1). It was excavated by a Danish archaeological team in 1956. The excavations exposed structures from a Mesolithic settlement. Also found were some of flints and arrowheads (al-Far 2000, 24; al-Thani 1996, 19). At the moment, we do not know if the Mesolithic people at Burgan lived in isolation, or whether they maintained contacts with other areas. The predominance of local stone being used for tools, and the absence of non-local stone, might suggest periods of self sufficiently.

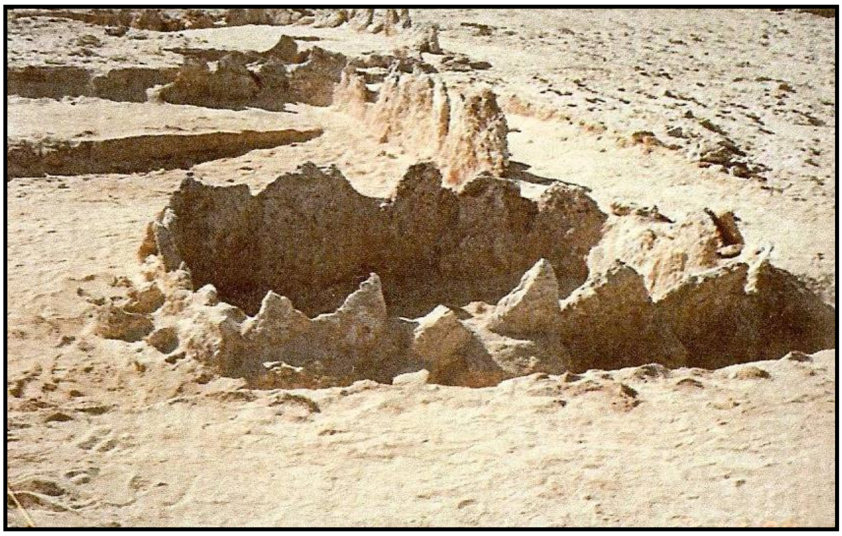


Figure 3.1. Photograph showing some al-Wusail structures (al-Thani 1996, 19).

3.1.2 Neolithic (8000 - 5500BC)

Wadi al-Batin

Wadi al-Batin is one of the most famous dry valleys in the State of Kuwait. It is located in the western part of the al-Jahra province. It is one of the most important topographic aspects in the State of Kuwait because it has a great river coming from the western Arabian Peninsula into Kuwait (al-Baz and al-Sarāwī 2000, 8). This river extends from the southwest to the northeast. It is about 7-10km wide, and about 57m deep in the middle, and about 75km in length (Kallweit and Beach 2002, 4). It gradually declines towards the north (Frohlich 1987, 4). The valley extends approximately 300km towards the southwest to Wadi al-Rimam in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Wadi al-Rimam widens at the southwest to reach its maximum size in the northwestern part and we can describe the area of Wadi al-Batin as a flat area of sand, a low-rise hill, sand dunes covered with a thin layer of gravel, creek water and smooth gravel (al-Baz and al-Sarāwī 2000, 23). Unfortunately, being currently located in a militarised area, Wadi al-Batin is difficult to approach without official permission. Its proximity to the Kuwait-Iraq border is the main reason for the restriction of archaeological surveys in that region. There have, however, been international archaeological surveys with results revealing that this area has both Neolithic and Islamic sites (al-Duweesh 2008a, 13).

Al-Qurian site 1

This site is located to the south of Kuwait City about 100km to the right of the Wafra highway. It is one of the most striking phenomena in the region (Dickson 1997, 65). This site is near to the towns of al-Subaihiya and Wafra, where there are water wells available. Al-Subaihiya town centre is now abandoned because it is located within the

oil fields. The site consists of blocks of flints, soft sand, arrowheads and scrapers (Poirier 2005, 2). These flints typologically date to the Neolithic period.

Al-Qurain site 2

This site is located about 90km south of Kuwait City,and 5km north of Tell Burgan and near the town of al-Subaihiya. The site contains small hills made of flint that are about 100cm in height and are spread over an area 1.5km across. It seems to have been a workshop for manufacturing stone tools (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2005, 3). These flints typologically date to the Neolithic period. If the sites (al-Qurain 1 and 2) were predominantly used for flint production, what we might be seeing is an area where people came together to forge new relations and maintain existing ones. The sites may have been places where specialists or elders passed on stories and knowledge to younger members of the society. Flint scatter sites may therefore have been significant locations in the Ubaid landscape (e.g. Edmonds 1999, 48). The people who met and created tools here may have been from one community, or from the wider landscape. At this time it is impossible to say, but it might suggest that people across the region were periodically moving and coming together at particular times.

Tell al-Sulaibikhat

This site is located about 7km west of Kuwait city. It forms a circular shape in the southern coast of Kuwait Bay. It consists of several hills rising approximately 9m from sea level (Khan 1975, 8). The site is covered with a layer of flint. It is clear that although most of the stone found is weathered by erosion, some individual pieces do seem to have been carved by human intervention. The excavations revealed that there are two layers. The upper layer is brown sand, approximately 20cm in thickness, containing flint stones. The bottom layer belongs to the geology of the hill as it

includes salty sediment. Among the findings collected are pieces of solid stone, red in colour, a flint knife and arrowheads (Paolo 1985, 2). That flints were found on the top of this hill may suggest a specialised social action. For example, young people were taken to the hill as part of a rite of passage, to become members of the community. For example, Conneller (2011) in discussing the work of Fischer (1975) details how some male neophytes were possibly introduced into the adult community during the Danish early Mesolithic (Maglemosian) at the site of Holmegârd V via the manipulation of flint nodules – and in some instances with scratched geometric and stylised human figures on the flint. It is also suggested that these rites of passage with stone also involved circumcision.

Mudairah Stone

This site is located in the northern coast of Kuwait Bay, on the road from al-Jahra city to Sabbiyah. It is approximately 30km from the city of al-Jahra between the Jal al-Zur Mountains and the Gulf shoreline. Its direction is to the northeast about 2-4km from the sea. The area from the Jal al-Zur Mountains and Kuwait Bay was covered with water when the Gulf was at a much higher level before 20,000BC. It consists of a large and a thick sandy stone split in half (see Figure 3.2). Its width is about 10m and its height about 6m. The stone base is supported by other stones. Hawkins (1990) suggested that it might be possible that the stone was washed out of the Jal al-Zur Mountains as a consequence of natural movements, but it is more likely that it was uprooted deliberately and moved by boat. This is unlikely though, as the weight of the stone greater than a boat at this time could probably have transported. It is much heavier than the Stonehenge bluestones in the United Kingdom.



Figure 3.2. Photograph showing the Mudairah Stone (adapted from the British archaeological team in Kuwait 2009).

On the upper parts of the surface, there are some images (see Figure 3.3). One of those engravings from the left side of the stone has been interpreted as a skull and eye by Sultan al-Duweesh, head of the Kuwaiti archaeological team, but they are not clear. Jonathan Tubb, of the Department of The Middle East at the British Museum, tried to interpret them, but found that they were in too poor a condition. Hawkins (1990) suggested that these inscriptions were tribal marks. There are two unclear drawings, maybe drawings of the ostrich bird, and there is a T symbol, and perhaps this is a cross (al-Duweesh 2008a, 17).



Figure 3.3. Photograph showing the superimposition of imagery: the upper white modern graffiti in Arabic overlays the older engraved inscriptions on the Mudairah Stone (adapted from the British archaeological team in Kuwait 2009).

Hawkins (1990) reported that the modern writings were in black but the ancient drawings and inscriptions were in red. He linked this system of writing with catacombs on Milos where the Christian signs in the 3rd and 4th century AD are coloured in red while other more recent marks are painted in black. On the lower part of the stone, specifically on the back of the stone, there are many inscriptions in black but they are clearly modern writings. There are some drawings in red, perhaps horses or donkeys (Hawkins 1990, 3), or giraffes (al-Duweesh 2008a, 17). They are similar to the horse drawings from the southwest of Saudi Arabia which date to 1000 - 650BC (Hawkins 1990, 2).

In the surrounding area of the Mudairah Stone there is a small hill of sandstone. It is about 10m north of the Mudairah. It has a single cup-mark, with a diameter of 8cm and a depth of 10cm. This type of single cup-mark is linked to the prehistoric signs which were prevalent in other parts of the prehistoric world, such as northwest Europe. It probably dates from 1000 - 50BC (Hawkins 1990, 3).

Hawkins (1990) noted that the inscriptions on the rock show several potentialities. Maybe it was a maritime tool to help the ships that crossed the northern part of the Arabian Gulf, or perhaps it was an important astronomical sight stone related to the sun and the moon.

Although Hawkins was not an archaeologist, he attempted to date this stone. Through his descriptions, he linked some inscriptions to prehistory and he finally dated this stone to 2000BC, because he thought these drawings synchronized with those in the southwest of Saudi Arabia. This is a comparative approach which is probably inaccurate, and al-Duweesh (2008a) dated this stone to the Neolithic period. In my opinion, there is not solid evidence to prove that this work is Neolithic. One way of proving this would be to find datable evidence, such as hammer-stones and organic materials, in secure contexts.

3.1.3 Mesopotamia

The term Mesopotamia is derived from the Greek name, which means the land between the rivers or the land between two rivers (e.g. the rivers Euphrates and Tigris). Mesopotamia is currently located in the Middle Eastern country of Iraq. Mesopotamia has different types of regions; each one has a unique geography. This requires different lifestyles for the people who live in them. The north of Mesopotamia consists of plains and hills. The land is fertile because of the over-flowing of rivers and heavy rains which flow from the mountains leaving mineral rich

deposits and silts, whereas in the south of Mesopotamia the land consists of marshy, wide, and flat plains. More than one society has settled there such as, Jamdat Nasr (3100 – 2900BC), Uruk (2900 - 2350BC) and Akkadian (2350 - 2000BC) (Pollock, 1999, 1).

Ubaid Culture (5300 – 3500BC)

The earliest settlements in southern Mesopotamia belong to the Ubaid culture, named after the site of Tell al-Ubaid, located on the alluvial plain of southern Mesopotamia. The first site was discovered by Woolley in 1922. The second Ubaid culture site to be found was Uqair, which was discovered in 1941, in the middle of Babylonia. In the same year a German archaeological expedition discovered Uruk. Ubaid sites have also been discovered beyond the traditional Mesopotamian regions (Masry 1997, 6) (see Figure 3.4). Some Ubaid culture features have been found in several areas. For example, in southern or northern Mesopotamia there are similar potteries and buildings. Here, we will review the Ubaid sites found in Kuwait.

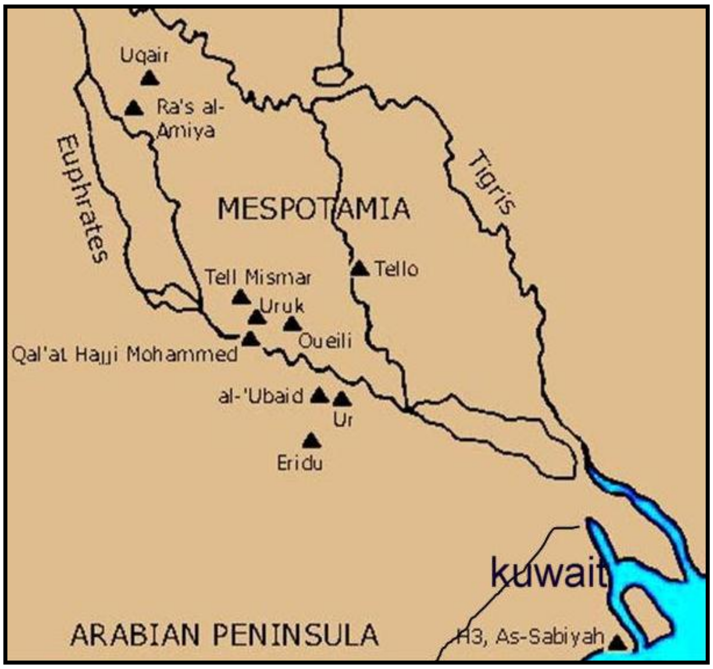


Figure 3.4. The main Ubaid sites in Mesopotamia (Crawford 1999).

The Ubaid culture has been divided into four phases with a continuous tradition expressed in a particular painted pottery style with design features. These phases are: Ubaid 1 or the Ubaid Eridu phase, dated to 5300 - 5080BC; Ubaid 2 or Ubaid Hajj Mohammed, dated to 5080 - 4300BC; Ubaid 3 phase dated to 4300 - 3900BC and the later Ubaid or classic Ubaid dated to 3900 - 3500BC (al-Ghazzi 2006, 1).

In general the Ubaid culture is characterised by large villages, with multi-roomed and rectangular mud houses. This description holds true for Mesopotamia and Kuwait. Ubaid sites generally contain large amounts of statues, pots, stone tools weapons, seals, pottery, graves and buildings (al-Bader 1974, 49-64; Stein 1994, 37). Ubaid sites predominantly seem to be semi-permanent sites. Potts (2003a) stated that there are two factors that indicate that the Ubaid sites on the coast of the Arabian Gulf were temporary sites. These are social and environmental factors. Firstly, Potts (2003a) argued that all of the sites are characterised by a flint industry, which is suggested to be mainly for hunting tools. Here, the hunters usually dwell in temporary huts. Elsewhere, on the coastal sites, there are a large numbers of shells and fish bones. This indicates that those sites were possibly more permanent seasonal camps. Secondly, the wind, especially the northern wind which is famous for its devastating effects, especially for damaging archaeological sites (often just leaving surface scatters), may have contributed to there not being all-year-round occupation. I will compare examples which have been found in several areas such as, Syria, Iran and Eastern Arabian Peninsula; for instance: pottery, building and burial.

(a) *Ubaid Pottery*

Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of this culture is the pottery, which varies in colour, predominantly being green, red, black and brown, and is often decorated with geometric brown or black designs (see Figure 3.5) The pottery ware can be fine with carefully smoothed sides, or coarser with grits, quartz sand and vegetal tempers. Ubaid I pottery, includes two types: rough pottery and soft pottery. It is black, red or brown in colour. At Tell al-Ubaid, the first site discovered by Woolley, were plates with flat edges, circular bowls and carinated bowls. Decoration appears on the vessels with parallel, intersecting or zigzag lines. With Ubaid II – III pottery, the clay is skillfully manipulated, thick and lightly painted. The surface is soft, and usually with black or brown lines (al-Bader 1974, 52).

Ubaid pottery has different sizes of rim with vessels either having a neck or no neck. Most of the Ubaid rims demonstrate painted decoration (Carter and Crawford 2002, 5). In addition, in Ubaid I (Ubaid Eridu) pottery, the clay is mostly greenish in colour and coarse. There is also Hajj Mohammed pottery, which has several colours such as, brown, purple, green and bright red. The decoration here is characterised by having one form: curved lines. Some Ubaid pottery has animal and bird drawings but they are often not clear (al-Bader 1974, 52-56).

Code	Name	Category	Ware Group	Thickness	Description	Comments
1	Fine Ubaid	Fine Ubaid	Ubaid	0.2-0.4	Fine green or whitish buff; NVT or cf Ware 2 but much finer. Carefully smoothed surfaces	Distinguished by v. smooth surface as much as fine fabric
2	Standard Ubaid	Standard Ubaid	Ubaid	0.3-1 cm	Green/buff/pale pinkish brown; many tiny voids and/or very tiny subangular grits. Variable	–
3	Coarser Standard Ubaid	Standard Ubaid	Ubaid	0.3-1 cm	Was a coarser version of 2	ABOLISHED. Merged with 2
6	Sandy Standard Ubaid	Standard Ubaid	Ubaid	0.3-1.3 cm	Green/buff; as 2 but mod. rounded quartz sand	Quartz Ubaid
7	Fine grit Standard Ubaid	Standard Ubaid	Ubaid	0.3-1 cm	Green/buff/pale grayish brown; as 2 but freq. tiny subangular grits	Grit Ubaid
9	Fine veg. and grit Standard Ubaid	Standard Ubaid Standard Ubaid	Ubaid Ubaid	0.3-1 cm 0.3-1 cm	Green; freq. fine grit and fine vegetal temper	Grit/veg. Ubaid; like 7 but apparently fine veg
12	Ubaid storage Jar	Ubaid Storage	Ubaid	1.1-1.6	As 2 but walls are over 1 cm thick	"Storage Jar Ubaid"
4	Coarse Red	Arabian Coarse	Arabian Coarse	0.5-1.5	Vegetal temper	Red, dark core; heavy coarse Coarse Red Ware
8	Coarse Red with shell	Arabian Coarse	Arabian Coarse	0.5-1.5	To heavy coarse veg. temper	Red, dark core; shell and mod. Coarse Red Shelly Ware
10	Coarse Buff	Arabian Coarse	Arabian Coarse	0.5-1.5	Buff/pale brown, dark core; heavy coarse veg temper (but finer than 4), mod. to freq. white and translucent grits, 1 mm but ->2 mm	Coarse Buff Ware; may be a variant of 4/8
11	Coarse Buff with red inclusions	Arabian Coarse	Arabian Coarse	0.5-1.5	Buff/pale brown, dark core; as 10 but with sbrnd red incls: grog?	Coarse Buff Grog? Ware; variant of 10
5	Coarse Green	Coarse Green	Other	up to 1.9	Green; mod to heavy coarse veg. temper	Coarse Green Ware; occ. painted
100	Unique	Unique	Other		Various	Unique ware

Figure 3.5. Example of the varied Ubaid pottery types discovered at H3 (Carter 2010, 37).

(b) *Ubaid Architecture*

Perhaps the most important characteristic of architecture of the Ubaid culture is the construction of specialist buildings, such as the temples. They are constructed from un-fired brick. Some archaeologists believe that these temples were built to the Anu god, the sky god in an ancient religion (al-Nadūri 1967, 190; Stein 1994, 38-9).

Eridu is one of the most important Ubaid sites in southern Mesopotamia (see Figures 3.6 and 3.7). It has offered some archaeologists and researchers an indication to the construction systems of the Ubaid culture (Roux 1964, 68). Eridu city, which is now known as Tell Abu Shahrain, is situated about 22km south of Nasiriya city in southern Iraq. Eridu was settled between 5000 and 2000BC during the Ubaid periods. It was the oldest Sumerian city known. The Sumerians suggested that this city was related to the god Enk. Eridu was famous for its temples, which were called ziggurats. The earliest temple was dated to the Ubaid period. It is characterised by a small room, which has probably an offering table (Safar *et al*. 1981, 81-9; Rice 2002, 145).

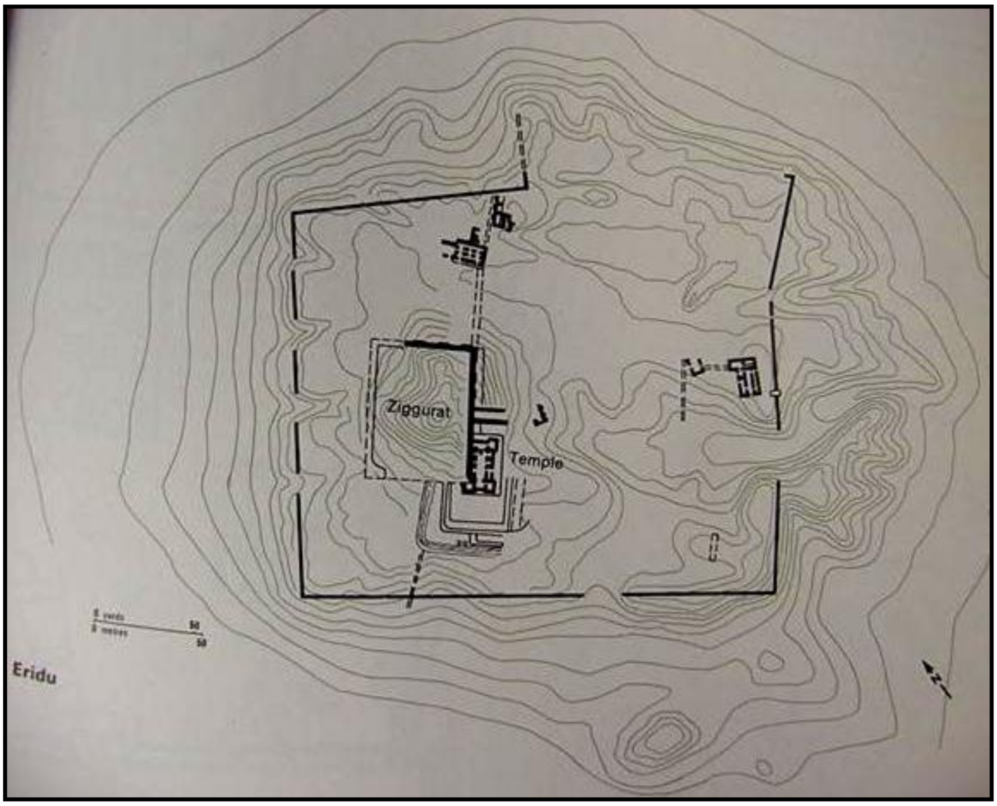


Figure 3.6. Photograph showing the location of the Eridu Temple (Hawkes 1974, 171).

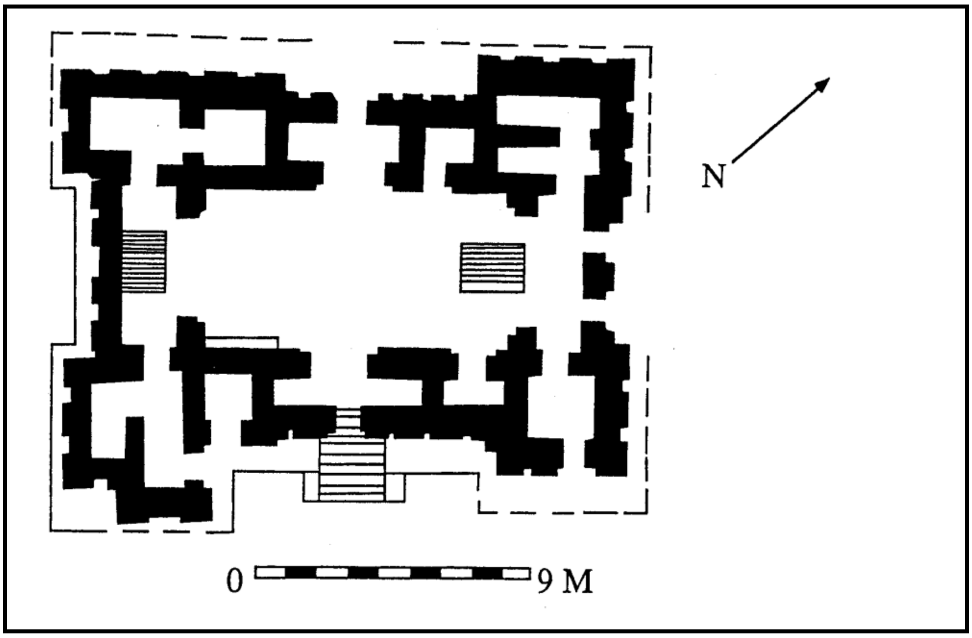


Figure 3.7. Showing the Eridu Temple in plan (Safar *et al*. 1981, 88).

Ubaid houses range in size, from 100 to 600m². The structure consists of a large main room which has a rectangular or T plan, with small rooms being built along the sides (see Figure 3.8). Some of the Ubaid houses have more units and rooms surrounding a long central hall (Pollock 1999, 48). There seem to be no universal architectural plans for Ubaid houses, which might mean that each individual structure adapted for personal occupation. Ubaid Houses are often described in functional terms; for instance, as domestic shelters for cooking, storage and sleeping, or as residential craft production locales (see discussions in Pollock 1999, 48; Carter and Crawford 2010, 207). Architecture might not always be this simple and functional though - often in modern situations some people pray in houses and some people eat and sleep in temples. Such different secular and sacred actions may have taken place in the Ubaid architectures. In some societies, such as Madagascar, the house becomes part of their identity (Bloch 1998; see also Bailey 1990). Therefore that house is not only for functional purposes such as sleeping, eating and cooking, but also it is active

and in certain circumstances can be seen to grow with its occupants (Bloch 1998). As with houses in modern Kuwait, they can have a personality, and they can exist with you.

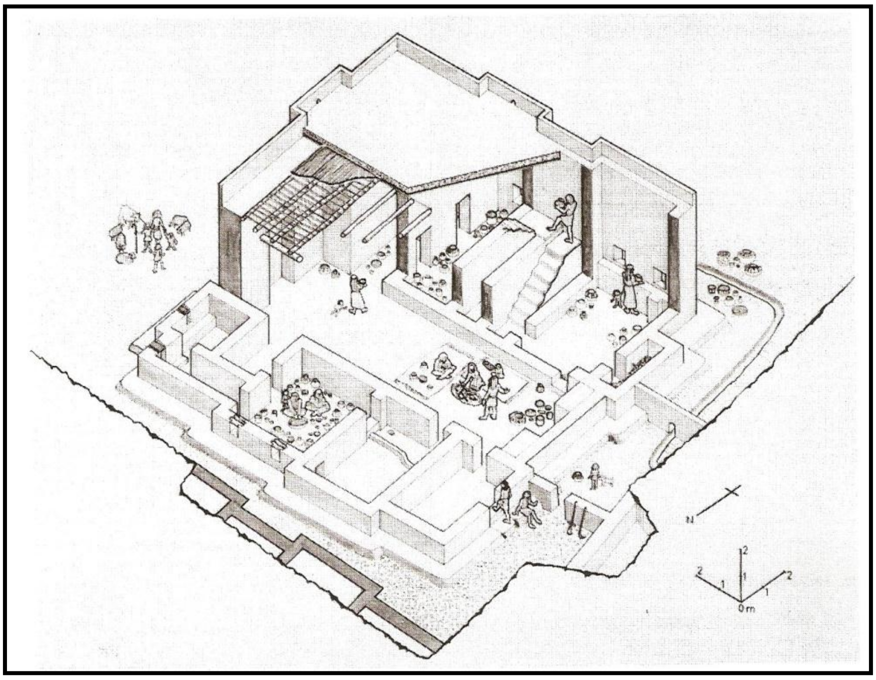


Figure 3.8. Ubaid house sections (Curtis 1982, 43).

The archaeological Iraqi expedition revealed the 16 layers of temple buildings, built one on the other. The upper layers date to the Ubaid culture (5300 - 3500BC) and Uruk culture (2900 – 2350BC). They were built in mud brick. Layer 16 perhaps refers to the first temple dating back to the Ubaid. It is a small building with square rooms, a passage near one of the corners and short walls that maybe represent internal divisions. There is a gap in the middle of the back wall of the altar. In the middle of the main room there is a table with burned remains. In layer 15 the temple becomes more expansive and its external lines take a rectangular shape (al-Bader 1974, 62).

(c) *Ubaid burial*

Ubaid burials are very formulaic - the grave is a rectangular shape and covered by mud brick. The Eridu cemetery in Iraq (5300 - 5080BC) has more than a thousand graves, and is thought of as the classic Ubaid example. Pottery has been found in some of the graves. It appears that they have been re-opened many times for other dead to be placed in them. These graves maybe were used for communal purposes. In addition, there are graves for children. Maybe they were considered members of society. The body lies on its back with the hands over the abdomen (al-Bader 1974, 64).

3.1.4 Kuwaiti Ubaid sites

H3 site

H3 may represent the key to unlocking the Ubaid in both Kuwait and in general. Was H3 a religious site or a burial site? Did people come here to celebrate and make offerings? Or did trade and exchange dominate, and if so, how did this work? This section will introduce the archaeology and attempt to answer these questions.

The site was found by Fahad al-Wohaibi, the director of the National Museum of Kuwait, in the 1980s. Al-Wohaibi, found in H3 stones on the surface and both decorated and plain Ubaid pottery, which date to the sixth millennium BC. He invited the British archaeological team (Carter, Crawford, Simeon, Meliaeu, Barrett from the London Institute of Archaeology) to work together at this site. Both the Kuwaiti team (from National Museum of Kuwait) and British team have excavated this site. The process of excavation at the H3 site took place over four seasons every spring, from 1998 until 2002 (Carter and Crawford 1999, 43).

The location of the H3 site is in the coastal plain at Sabbiyah on the north coast of Kuwait bay in the edge of Jazirat Dubaij in the north Jal al-Zur (see Figure 3.9). The Jal al-Zur Mountains are made up of sandstone and limestone dating to the Holocene and Miocene (see Chapter 2). Jazirat Dubaij is located in the southwest of Umghairah wells, surrounded by mudflats (Subkha) 750m in length and 300m wide. It has red sandstones and Ghar that may be indicated that this area had an underlying geology of coastal plain and maybe it was part of Jal al-Zur (al-Duweesh 2003, 151).

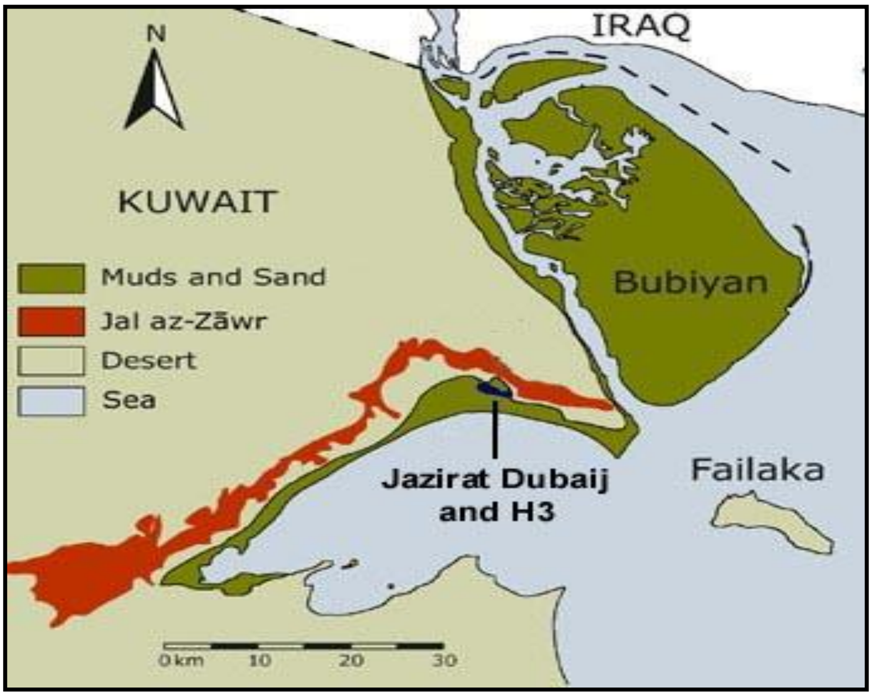


Figure 3.9. Map showing Jazirat Dubaij and the H3 site (Crawford 2002).

Methodological excavation of H3 site

They accomplished an archaeological field-walking survey, as the artifacts are visible on the surface. A contour plan of the site was created in relation to where there were surface collections of artifacts with structures. The site became clearer, based on a building dated to the sixth millennium BC. This building consists of several rooms (Carter and Crawford 1999, 48). Each season the team excavated part of this site and

gave each individual part a symbol such as: A, B, C, D and so on (see Figure 3.10) (al-Duweesh 2003, 151).

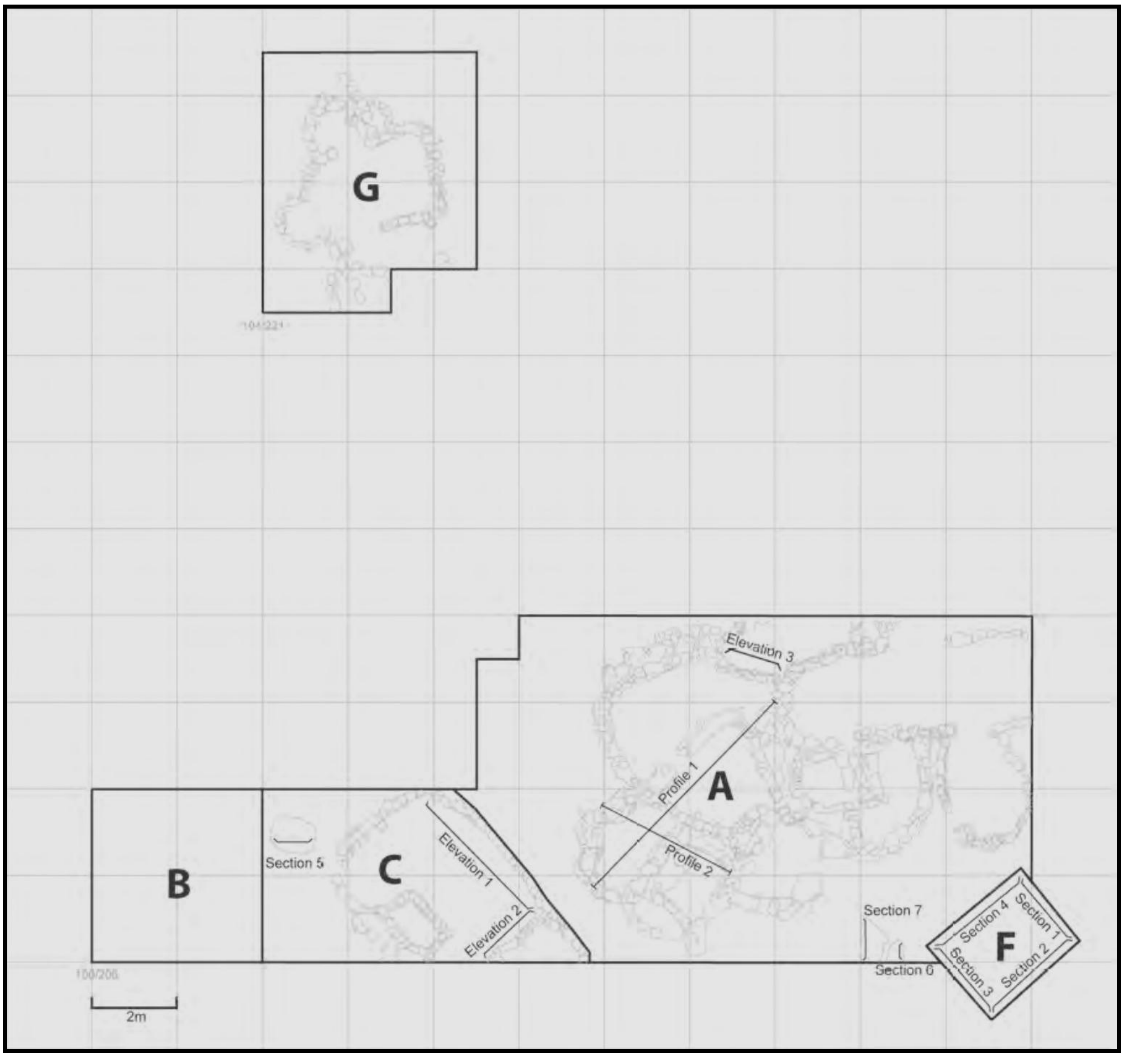


Figure 3.10. Plan showing H3 area sections (Carter and Crawford 2010, 10).

Area A

This area has a group of rooms which are given numbers 1, 6, 7, 11, 17 and 18. All the rooms have an oval shape. They were built of natural stones from the Sabbiyah region, red sandstone and some sea stone which was placed as the basic wall. The builders have used a mixed soil between the stones. The stones were placed in parallel to each other. The stones in this area are not trimmed and are of different sizes, with the exception of room 15 which used small stones that were well selected. It seems

that the northern wall of room 18 was added to the building later, probably to expand the building due to an increased number of people at H3. The ground floor of room 7 consists of a set of burned layers. It seems that it was built many years before room 11. The eastern wall of this room had been added later and probably has been restored. The walls in area A and C have been built over a layer of shells mixed with sherds of pottery, flints and some bones.

Area B

The excavation in this area was divided into four phases from B1 to B4 depending on the level of excavation. The phases of B3-B4 are likened to the deposit in area A; they have shells, flints, drills and beads. Also, they found ceramic which are different in size but the manufacturing techniques are similar. Perhaps this is indicative of the same person manufacturing them. In the level B2, a large number of shells and beads were found, along with Ubaid 2 and Ubaid 3/4 pottery. In B3 they found small quantities of beads and worked shell, ceramic nail, hearth material (burnt, ash and broken cooking pots), and bitumen fragments (Crawford 2001, 7-8; Carter 2002, 6).

Area C

This area is located between areas A and B. This area is characterised by its large size and rectangular shape. It is 3.5m long and 3.17m wide. It has a door to the west, some stone axes and fragments of pottery, possibly indicating a workshop. This room was built from 4-7 rows of thin stones and the stone gaps were stuffed with sand. To the southern part of the room, there is another room that has a door to the north. It takes an oval shape and was named No. 9. It was probably used for storage. Its length is about 155cm and width 77cm, and its wall height is approximately 14cm. There is a pit in the southern part of the room containing burned deposits, a mixture of utensils of pottery and painted pottery coated with bitumen.

Area F

This area contained a number of ceramic and beads, shells and fragments of worked bones. Perhaps these quantities of pottery, shells and beads were used by people as ornaments. Also discovered was a fire pit, indicating that this area was maybe used for smoking, cooking, using animal products or melting bitumen. The significance of people wearing ornaments maybe highlights a desire to create a sense of personal identity or to look different from other people.

Area G

This area is a small hill 6 x 6m located north of the H3 site. In the hill was discovered a room 2 x 3m including three small compartments maybe used for storage. The walls were built of limestone. This room was built in three phases and this is reflected in the room through the northwest row stones. In room 30 the wall is orientated from west to north, and there are a pile of rocks damaged by the effects of fire, so it may have been a fireplace and there are similarities between Room 29 and Room 7.

H3 Finds

Over 5000 fragments of pottery have been found in the H3 site; 80% of them are imported pottery from Mesopotamia and 20% are local pottery. The Mesopotamian Ubaid pottery is characterised by green clays and generally is a fine fabric, whereas the local pottery (often termed Coarse Red Ware or Straw Tempered Coarse Ware) is predominately red or dark brown clays with a vegetal temper (Carter 2010, 31-7). This maybe confirms a network exchange between Mesopotamia and the H3 site. Regarding the ways in which trade can operate, Karlovsky (1972) argued for three examples of goods transferring: direct contact trade, exchange and central place trade (see Figure 3.11).

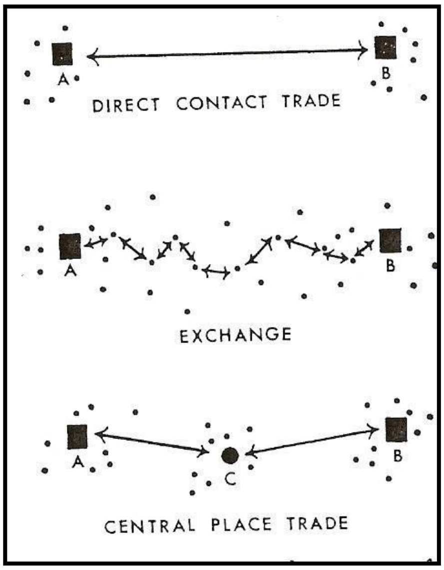


Figure 3.11. Image showing different processes of long distance trade (Karlovsky 1972, 223).

1) Direct contact trade: this type trade is uninterrupted between two main places. For example between A and B, here goods are transported between them without an intermediary or trading stations. Furthermore, members of A might have founded commercial colonies in B for specific goods and value. These commercial colonies usually managed by one of the principal areas involved.

2) Exchange: this type of distribution of goods does not have specific organization or definite value for specific commodities. Therefore, goods from site A and their access to B are via seemingly random exchanges from site to site. It is hard to isolate whether the material was carried to the site through the exchange or separately produced through spread of design and proposed tool type.

3) Central place trade: this type is clear when the production of goods are in a few places. Therefore, site C will be a central place either to ship goods produced in other places or to export its own goods. The process of shipment might be under the management of A and B members living in the C site. Therefore, there is a direct connection between C site and both of A and B (Karlovsky 1972, 222-3).

Given the archaeological evidence, it is likely that Central place trade operated in the Ubaid periods, with H3 positioned as the central trading hub between Mesopotamia to the north and the Eastern Arabian Peninsula to the south.

The local pottery is often found on the surface, with outside and inside decoration. There are lots of pots, such as large jars and medium-sized pots that have a short neck. The green painted pottery is the largest quantity of imported Ubaid pottery found. It is characterised by a large rim that is decorated with horizontal lines. The local coarse pottery is a mixture of clay, straw and plants - it is coarse and was perhaps used for manufacturing cooking utensils (Carter 2010, 33). Most of the pottery is fragmented, but this is more a result of post-depositional damage (such as ground salt action), rather than deliberate breakage for social purposes (Carter 2010, 35; Chapman and Gaydarska 2007). There are *c*.780 pieces of ornament which have been collected on this site. They consist of several beads, shells, snails, lobular forms, discs and flints. This may indicate that the site was a bead factory because Kuwait has a strategic location on the trade route between the societies which existed then, located in the northern or southern Arabian Gulf (see Figures 3.12 and 3.13).

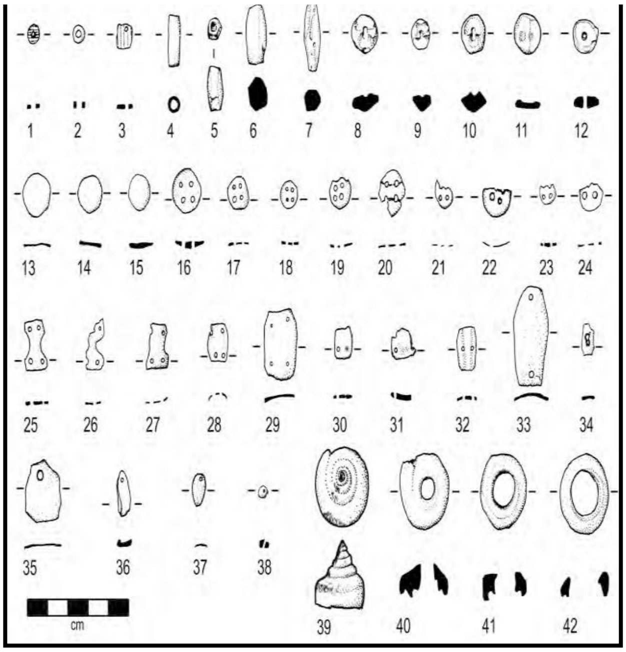


Figure 3.12. Illustration of shell artifacts from H3 (Carter and Crawford 2010, 73).

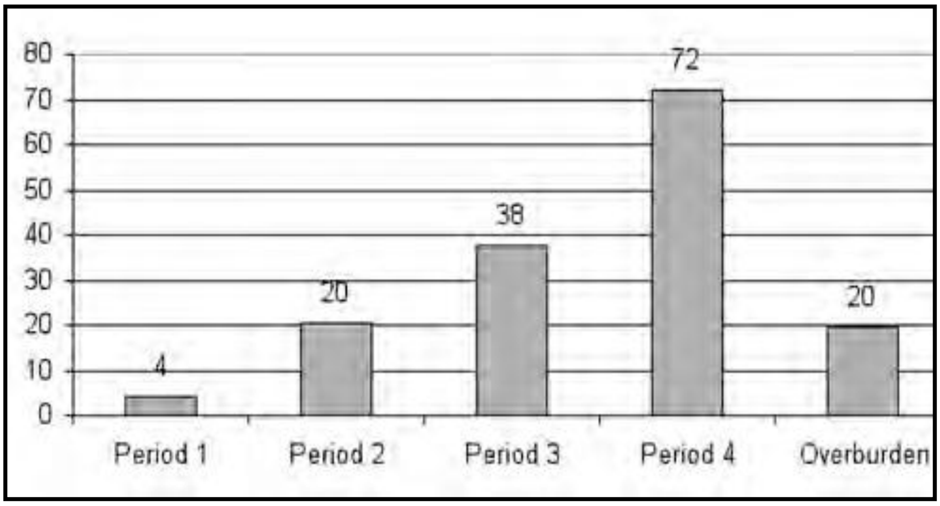


Figure 3.13. Chart showing disc bead per m³ in each period (Carter and Crawford 2009, 74).

There were also hunting tools, such as arrowheads of flint to hunt birds and animals, and bone hooks for fishing. In addition, there are lots of different flint tools, such stone axeheads, scrapers and knives. Also there are two types of obsidian which may come from southern Arabia. Also found was a group of quartzite, and shell jewelry consisting of 44 shell beads (see Figure 3.14). On the site, there were animal

bones, such as cows, goats, gazelles, fox and deer. This maybe reflects the daily lives of the people of H3. People seem to be farming but also supplementing their diets with hunting. Ras Abrūk site which is located in Qatar dating to Ubaid III period has similar findings to H3 such as, fish and gazelles bones, shells and beads (al-Thani 1997, 45). This indicates that people relied on both fishing and hunting to enhance a farming lifestyle. Also, it maybe indicates an exchange network between H3 and the Eastern Arabian Peninsula where large quantities of shell beads have been found in most archaeological sites. This may demonstrate that H3 imported Ubaid pottery (80% found was non-local) and exported shell beads to other areas in return, as part of a Central Place exchange network. Furthermore, there is a sherd of pottery that has a boat painted with masts. There are large quantities of bitumen; this indicates that the people who lived here maybe used this bitumen as waterproofing for their boats or ships. Also a small model boat has been found at H3 in the wall of chamber 15. It is about 14.5cm long, 7cm wide and 5cm high. It is made of a medium-coarse red ceramic, perhaps the local coarse red ware. Boats may have been used for both fishing and exchange.

It is unlikely that H3 was primarily a religious site, as we do not have evidence for excessive burial or temple structures. People may have been making a pilgrimage to deposit pottery, but the wealth of shell ornaments leaving the site, does suggest otherwise.

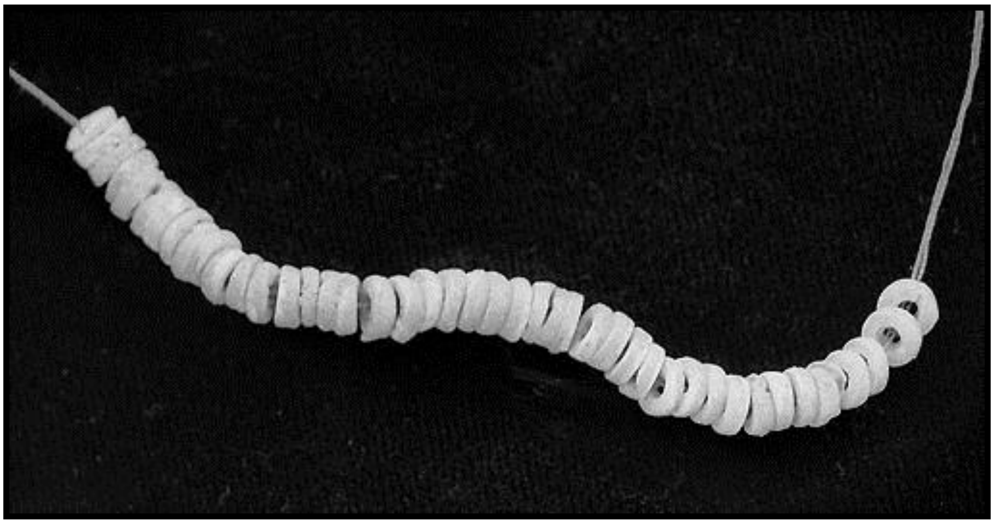


Figure 3.14. Photograph showing shell jewellery from H3 (Crawford 1999).

Recently discovered Ubaid sites

The Ubaid culture is characterised by large villages, with multi-roomed and rectangular mud houses. They contain large amounts of statues, pots, stone tools weapons, seals, pottery, graves and buildings (al-Bader 1974, 49-64). Recently, twelve Ubaid sites have been found in Sabbiyah, and some have been surveyed by the Kuwaiti archaeological team (see Figure 3.15). Only one of them was excavated by the Polish archaeological team in 2009. I will mention some of them as examples.



Figure 3.15. Map showing new Ubaid sites in Sabbiyah area (adapted by Hamed al-Mutairi from Google Earth 2011).

(a) *SMQ24*

This site is located in the east side of the Mughairah area and in the bottom of the al-Zur Mountains. It is about 0.4km northeast of Mughairah wells. It is the second known site belonging to the Ubaid and the first site found away from the sea. This would demonstrate that the Ubaid people were becoming more powerful or confident, exerting greater controls over resources such as water-wells and food sources.

The site is represented by of a collection of worked and un-worked shells, spread over an area of 20 x 20m. As with H3 discussed above, this again might indicate that this area of Kuwait was a shell-bead industry which was exporting to other areas. The findings on the surface of this site include: a number of lithic

fragments, coloured pottery with black geometric designs, and greenish pottery which is similar to the examples found at H3 (al-Duweesh 2008a, 18).

(b) *SBH29*

This site occupies a large hill located just 300m from the right side of the Jahra - Sabbiyah highway. It was discovered by the Arabian Gulf archaeological team in 2005/6. The team excavated the southwest part of the hill, which was demarcated by an oval shaped drystone wall, supported by a prominent row of stones measuring 50m across from the north to the south, and 40m from the east to the west. Its height is about 3m and width *c*.1.45m. Inside the wall there are accumulations of stones, which might prove to be graves. The site was covered with a layer of windblown sand. In the southeastern side there is a slope leading to the valley; in the northwest there is a broad plain. Discovered on the surface of this site, a piece of black-painted pottery dates to the Ubaid (al-Duweesh and Salem 2009, 30-1). At this stage we do not know whether this pottery is imported or local.

(c) *SBH35*

This site was discovered by the Arabian Gulf archaeological team. It is located in the Bahra area in the middle of the Sabbiyah region. It is about 0.2km from the east of SBH29 site in the bottom of a small rocky rise 1.5m high. There are some fragments of painted pottery, pieces of flint and shells spread on the site surface. The structures of this site take a circular shape. There is a wall built from the east about 4m long and 110cm wide. The findings of this site include: a part of the base and body of a black coloured vessel; a fragment of greenish pottery decorated with geometric designs; red fragments of pottery with a small body and rim; a fragment of pottery with red clay mixtures with bran shell (which is similar to the pottery found in H3); a white stone tool, maybe used as a knife and fragments of ostrich eggs (al-Duweesh 2008a,

19). I believe that maybe there is link between the fragments of ostrich eggs here in this site and the ostrich art which is drawn on the Mughairah rock. Some Ubaid people seem to have been aware of ostriches.

(d) *SBH38*

This newly discovered Ubaid site excavated by the Polish archaeological team in 2009 was initially found by the Kuwaiti archaeological team few years earlier. It is about 7km away from the H3 site (Bielinski 2010). It is about 100m from the northwest of the SBH29 site in a low area, and its surface is covered by soft sand (see Figure 3.16). The walls are embedded in the sand. This site might present the main locus of Ubaid settlement in the Sabbiyah region for several reasons. It is located in the middle of the Sabbiyah area, is large in size, and is rich in archaeological remains (al-Duweesh 2008a, 20-21).

The site is about 120m from east- west and 35m north-south. To date, 250m² of the eastern area have been excavated by the Polish team, and a large house was found. This house is about 11.5m long and 8m wide. It has 13 rectangular rooms, each measuring about *c*. 1.90m long and 3.50m wide (see Figure 3.17). Four rooms in this house have been built of cobblestone. The height of the wall is approximately 0.60m, and made of stone. In the northern part of house 1 there are remains of three rooms and parts of three others which were built in two rows parallel to the main block of house 1 (Bielinski 2009, 3). The finds in SBH38 include: large quantities of Ubaid pottery (bowls and coarse wares), one hammer-stone flints and animal bones (Bielinski 2009, 6; see Figure 3.18).



Figure 3.16. Photograph showing SBH38 with the Polish team (Bielinski 2010).



Figure 3.17. Photograph showing walls and rooms at SBH38 (Bielinski 2010).



Figure 3.18. Photograph showing some of findings in SBH38 (Bielinski 2010).

(e) *SBH36*

This site is located to the west of the SBH29 site. The estimated area is about of 200 x 150m. It has adjacent rooms forming an oval-shape. Also there are limestone walls. Its surface findings include painted and unpainted pottery fragments, flint and shells (al-Duweesh 2008a, 21).

(f) *SBH34*

This site is a large circular site and it is located in the Bahra area. The site is covered with sand. There are two parallel walls extending towards the east then embedded into the sand. Pieces of ostrich eggs, flint and pottery fragments of greenish clay, dating back to the Ubaid period, were found spread over the site surface. The excavations are not completed yet, and although preliminary interpretations suggest that this was a temple (al-Duweesh 2008a, 21), there is not enough evidence to support this.

(g) *SM10*

This site is a small site located in the edge of a small rise about 1m high, in the Umghati area. It is demarcated from the east with a sandy boundary belonging to a modern police station. The surface findings in this site are fragments of pottery that are similar to H3 examples, stone tools of flints and many shells. Although al-Duweesh (2008a, 21) suggests that this site was used for collecting shells, it is unlikely that there was a single function site in the Ubaid period. Moreover, it has been found in this site other products such as stone tools, pottery and flints.

Due to the lack of precision dating strategies, we unfortunately do not currently know whether these sites were occupied simultaneously, or whether they represent staged/phased occupations, being built one after the other. H3 does, however, seem to be unique in that it is located in a prominent coastal location. That there are similarities between the sites (such as pottery and architecture) might suggest that we have people living with shared beliefs about the world. We might be witnessing a cohesive culture (at some level) that spread from Kuwait to Syria. To explore this issue further, I will now briefly review the Syrian evidence.

3.1.5 Other Ubaid distributions

Syria

Ubaid sites have been spread throughout a wide area within the Fertile Crescent (Masry 1997, 6). There are many Ubaid sites in Syria such as, Tell Abr, Tell Barak, Tell al-Mashnaqa, Tell Zaidan and Tell al-Hammam al-Turkman (Akkermans 1988, 109). I will just give a brief description of three of them as they are classic examples.

(a) *Tell al-Hammam al-Turkman*

Tell al-Hammam al-Turkman is a large hill 500 x 450m, about 75km north of Arqa on the eastern bank of the Balikh River in northern Syria (see Figure 3.19). The archaeological team of the University of Amsterdam excavated this site in 1981. The Ubaid settlement site lies on the eastern slope of the hill dating back to the late fifth and fourth millennium BC (Akkermans 1988, 109-10).

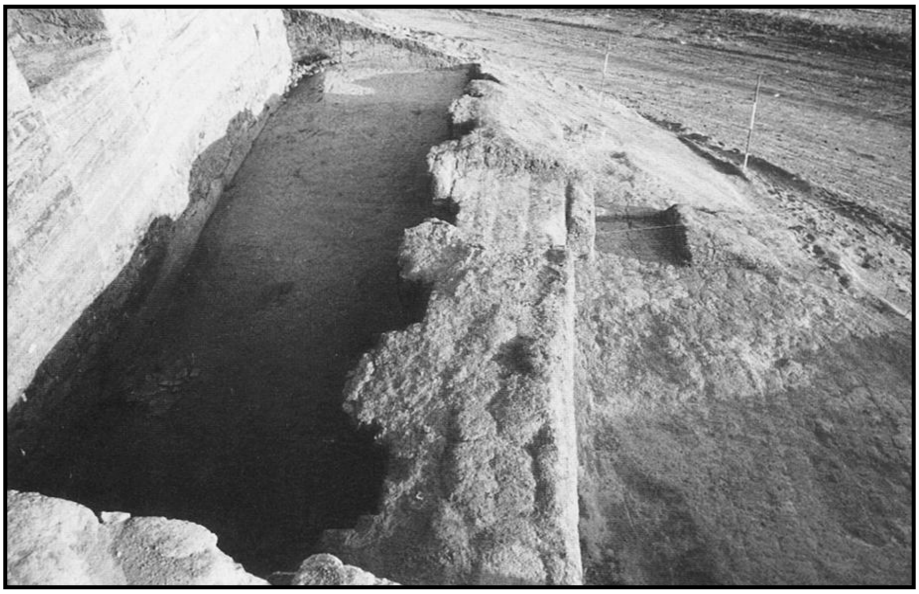


Figure 3.19. Photograph showing the Tell al-Hammam -Turkman site (Weiss 1991, 720).

(b) *Tell al-Mashnaqa*

Tell al-Mashnaqa is located in the middle of the Habur region on the eastern bank of the Habur River and approximately 40km south of al-Hasseke, and was discovered by the French archaeological expedition. It has Ubaid pottery dating back to the fourth phase of Ubaid culture. It consists of a complex of buildings. The lower layers show that there are two buildings at least. The northern building has four small rooms measuring from 3.5-4.0m^2 and a three room-unit to the east and one room has a separate entrance to the west (see Figure 3.20). From the south of this structure, there is a huge eroded building which just a small part was exposed (Weiss 1991, 685-92).

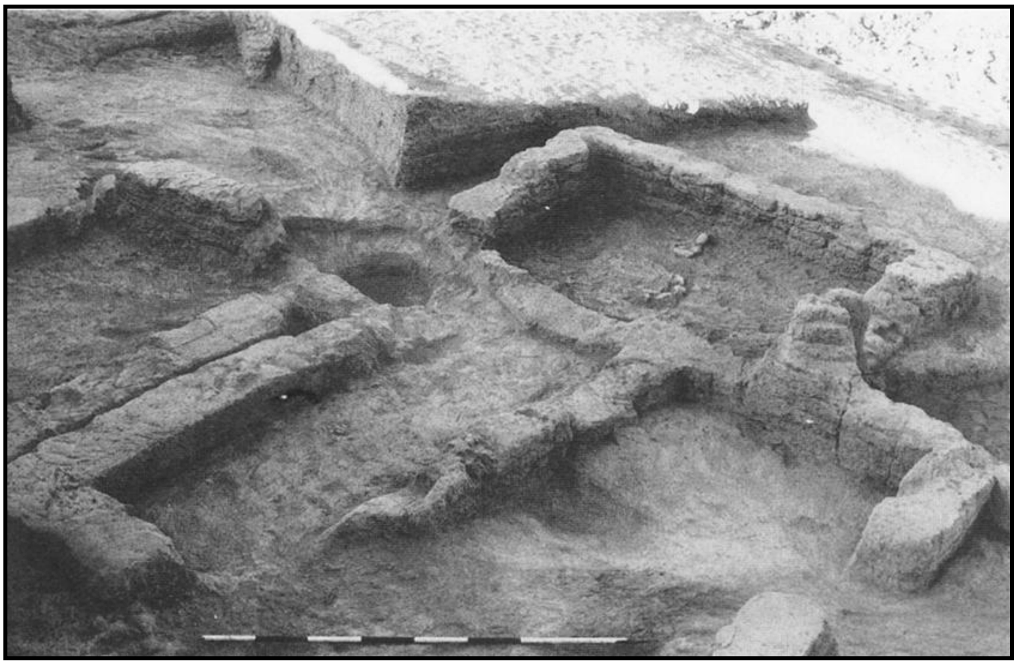


Figure 3.20. Photograph showing the remains of an Ubaid house in Tell al-Mashnaqa (Weiss 1991, 69).

(d) *Tell Zaidan*

Tell Zaidan is located on the northern bank of the Balikh River about 3km east of Raqqa . It consists of three mounds and a lower town which is located in the north of the site. It covers an area of about 600 x 200m .The excavation of this site started in 2008 by the American and Syrian archaeological team (al-Azzu 2010, 1).

The southern mound is the highest at about 15m (see Figure 3.21). It is a large Ubaid town. Its size alone makes it a very important Ubaid site in Syria, giving us crucial information about the Ubaid society in general (Stein 2008, 127). So far, with limited excavations in Kuwait, it is already possible to track similarities between the Ubaid in Syria with Kuwait. This further supports the proposal that the Kuwaiti Ubaid did not occur in isolation.



Figure 3.21. Photograph showing Tell Zaidan (Stien 2008, 127).

Iran

There are many Ubaid sites in Iran, for example, Susa and Chogha Mish. Susa is situated on the Susiana plain in the southwest of Iran (Wright 1975, 130). Susiana A and B may be contemporaneous with the early Ubaid phase. In addition, Ubaid pottery has been found around the Bushire coast which is almost opposite an Ubaid site on the west bank of the Arabian Gulf (Masry 1997, 9). Earlier discussions focused on the relations between Kuwait and Syria – here we will look at similarities in data between Iran and Kuwait, again to highlight that Kuwait did not exist in isolation during the Ubaid periods.

3.1.6 Ubaid sites in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula

Ubaid pottery has been found along the Eastern Arabian Peninsula in many sites such as, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (see Figure 3.22).

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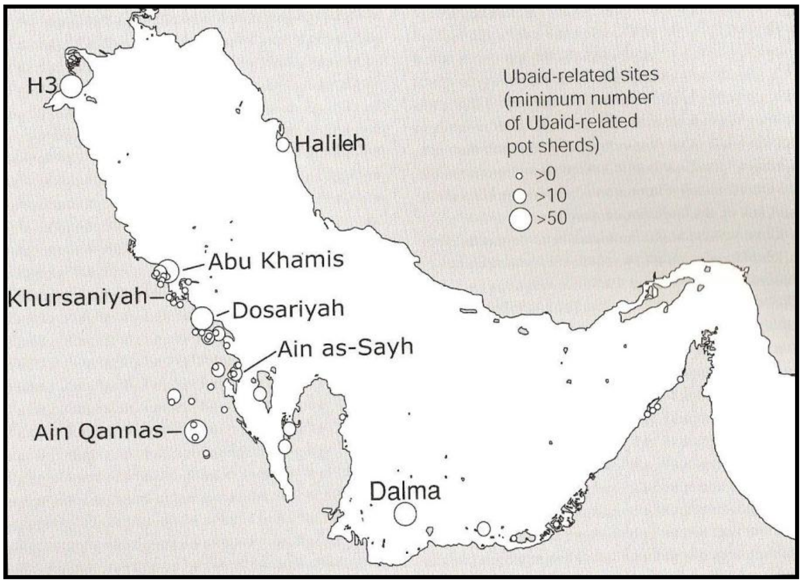


Figure 3.22. Map showing the distributions of Ubaid sites in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula (Carter and Crawford 2010, 3).

The Saudi Arabian sites

Saudi Arabia has several sites from the Ubaid period. The first site, discovered by Burkholder who worked for the Aramco Oil Company in 1968, was the al-Dusariya, which is related to the Ubaid on the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, 12km south from Jubayl and about 45km north of the oasis of Qatif and 9km from the Mount of Berry (Potts 2003a, 107; al-Ghazzi 2006, 2; Biby 1973, 64). This site is about 150km away from the sea coast and was on a large sand hill. This discovery was one of the most important for the eastern region. At this site, several tools have been found belonging to the Ubaid culture, including: remnants of knives made of flints, arrowheads and small drills. Other pieces were also found, such as some pieces of plaster or gypsum scattered on the surface of the site, which may be indicative of a

type of housing. Some shells (*Balanus Amphitrite*) were found on the remnants of these pieces, which might indicate high water levels from the Arabian Gulf on this site.

Masry worked at al-Dusriya and excavated seven test pits of 2 x 2m and depth of about 3.50m; it was clear from these pits that seven separate layers exist (al-Shaikh 2002a). The most recent one dates to 4185BC, concurrent with the Ubaid 3 and the oldest dates back to 4950BC, concurrent with the Haji Muhammad or the Ubaid 2. The people in this site were dependent on several foods sources including: sheep, goats and wild animals, with marine resources, such as fish and shellfish. This reflects the similarities between H3 and the other sites in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula, where the people relied on fishing and hunting at that time. Again we have possible farmers and complex fisher hunters.

A number of the sites excavated by Masry (1997) belong to the Ubaid period, such as Abu Khamis, which is approximately 85km away from the north of al-Dusariya. This site consists of a hill, 10m high, and includes abundant quantities of pottery and stone tools including a small drill, and tools for repairing objects (dating from about 3710 - 3615BC). The tools found on the surface floors date from about 3800BC, with pottery showing similarities with the Ubaid pottery. The many pieces of plaster and bones of fish, animals and conch shells, suggests a lifestyle similar to the pattern of life in al-Dusariya but maybe for a shorter duration.

Another site was found by Masry in al-Hasā which is located in the east of Saudi Arabia in the region of Ain-Qanas. The finds parallel pottery found on the surface of the Ubaid 2 civilisation in Mesopotamia (Hajj Muhammad) and is similar to the pottery found in the first four layers that are less refined and older. No pottery was found under the fourth layer. The excavation by Masry in the 1990s discovered

14 layers and revealed the existence of a well, with all the bottom layers containing pieces of flint tools (Masry 1997, 65).

Ain al-Sayh Site

Al-Shaikh (2002a) stated that this is a temporary fishing site located about 10km away from the south of Dhahran, 4km northwest of Azizyah and 5km from the Arabian Gulf, in the al-Sayh Oasis. Within this oasis is an old water well called al-Sayh, which is believed that be the home for the Arabs of Persia who migrated to the mainland region of Persia, and founded their second major settlement known as Langa.

Initially a field-walking survey was conducted in 1987. This produced from the surface accumulations of orange pottery (see Figure 3.23) and some black pottery with a wide neck having the tip sloping outwards. The outside surface of the pottery contained residues of bitumen. Unfortunately, most of the pottery found was in a very bad state due to the high humidity and salt at the site. Also excavated were some broken pieces of flint stone. Other interesting items, such as stone knives, were also found. The Ubaid pottery was found at the northern part of the site. The other pottery found was an orange jar assumed to be local pottery.



Figure 3.23. Photograph showing part of a jar on the surface at Ain-Sayh (adapted from al-Shaikh 2002b).

Lots of small fragments of bitumen were discovered; these might have been used as waterproofing materials for boats. The presence of bitumen in the pottery indicates that these pieces were imported from Oman or Yemen, because there are no local sources of bitumen in the Eastern Coast of the Peninsula (Carter and Crawford 2002, 9). The existence of bitumen indicates the presence of an early trade movement in the Eastern Arabia Peninsula. The local pottery, which is unique in its red and black colouration, differs from the imported and finer and greener coloured Ubaid pottery found at the site. We do not currently know the percentages of local versus non-local, but at this time it does appear as if local makers were trying to imitate Mesopotamian Ubaid pottery styles with local clays. Ubaid pottery and bitumen may therefore, have been seen as significant, important and even prestigious. Relations (such as exchange networks) may have had to be maintained to ensure that both the Ubaid pottery and bitumen arrived on site.

Bahrain is an island located opposite the Eastern Arabian Peninsula. Ubaid sites were found in Bahrain, for example al-Markh located on the southwest coast. The site area is 10,000m² and it is approximately 1.4km from the shoreline (Masry 1997, 93). Roaf who excavated the site in 1976, found Ubaid pottery dating to the Ubaid 4 phase or the late Ubaid (Abdul-Aziz 2009, 73).

The peninsula of Qatar is located in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula. It has several Ubaid sites such as al-Da'asa, Ras Abrūk, and Khūr (Masry 1997, 94-5). Ras Abrūk is located in the northwest of Qatar and was discovered by the Danish archaeological team in 1960. The British archaeological team excavated the site in 1973 and found Ubaid 4 pottery (Taha 2003a, 34-5). Shagra site is located in the southeast of Qatar (Carter 2003, 81).

In the United Arab Emirates, there are several sites related and dated to Ubaid 3, Ubaid 4 and Ubaid 2 (Hujji Mohammed). These sites include Umm al-Qaiwain, Marawah and Dalma Island. The most famous is the site of Dalma, and I will briefly introduce it here.

Dalma is situated on one of the United Arab Emirates’ islands located 45km off the coast of Abu-Dhabi. ADIAS (Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey) conducted an archaeological survey of Dalma Island in 1992. This site, which relates to Ubaid periods 3-4, was found within the compound Jama'aiya nahda Li-imra'at al-Zubyaniya by the Abu Dhabi Women's Association. Ubaid pottery was found and it relates to Ubaid 3-4. The materials found such as fish bones and beads, indicated that there was seasonal activity, maybe during the season of pearl fishing. The example of Dalma indicates that there was pottery exchanged between Mesopotamia and the Eastern Arabian Peninsula, possibly via H3, which perhaps reflects social exchange

networks (Beech *et al*. 2000, 41-5). This maybe indicates that this site was a exchange centre. Furthermore, Ubaid pottery has been found on Marawah Island, about 100km to the west Abu Dhabi city (Beech 2005, 37).

3.2 Discussion

The Ubaid pottery, found at H3 in Kuwait is sequenced to Ubaid 2 and Ubaid 3; there is also evidence for a local pottery similar in colour to Ubaid pottery, but made with non-Mesopotamian clays. This pottery perhaps came from Central Arabia because similar pottery was found in many sites in Central Arabia, for example at al-Dusariya (Carter and Crawford 2002, 7). Masry (1997) and Piesinger (1983) have suggested that populations from Mesopotamia and the central Gulf had a common ethnic origin. Masry (1997) proposed that Ubaid pottery, which has been found along the Eastern Arabian Peninsula, moved as a consequence of the cyclical migration of some part of the population. Piesinger (1983) argued for an economic hypothesis; she stated that an ethnically continuous population developed and adapted animal husbandry, riverine and marine fishing, whilst settling down to cultivate both regions. Carter (2002) suggested that both opinions were incorrect because the new archaeological operation in the south of Mesopotamia at ʻAwailī illustrates a pottery culture dated to Ubaid 0, and therefore ancestral to all the Ubaid phases.

Uerpmann and Uerpmann (1996) argued against Piesinger's (1983) hypothesis, stating that agriculture already existed in southern Mesopotamia and that Arabian Peninsula life still depended on herding. Ubaid pottery may have moved because of exchange in the Arabian Gulf (e.g. 80 % of H3 pottery was imported from Mesopotamia and maybe exchanged with beads), or by festival exchange in public events as gifts. The ceremonies that pottery was used in were possibly akin to

celebrations, where objects were transferred by presentation or gift exchange. This could be in such cases as, exchange with neighbouring or visiting groups, marriage and (re)negotiation (Carter and Crawford 2010, 67). In another context, Gamble (1999) stated that Venus figurines were made to be exchanged with other people to assist communication when languages were different, to aid and facilitate marriage arrangements and to help transfer information about good hunting grounds, places of resource or shelter in Upper Paleolithic environments. Here, I think both Carter and Crawford (2010) and Gamble (1999) concentrate on the social network and activity. The distribution of Ubaid pottery could therefore have facilitated a wider social information network. The information may have been functionally motivated, such as the best ways to make a well, build a temple, boat or repair a broken pot; or it may have been more abstract, such as belief system narratives or fables.

Potts (2003a) reported that through Hoogerwoerd's description (he was General Dutch Consulate in Bushire in 1886), we have a probable reason why Ubaid pottery spread out to the south towards the Ras al-Khaimah Emirate. He gives an example of the Oman coastal society or as he calls them, the Real Bedouin Sea. Their community consists of several ethnicities, Arabs, Baluch, Mehri and some of the Hadramout people. These people were mobile, seasonally wandering from place to place, spending at least three months each year on the Baluchistan Coast. They salted and dried their fish before their return to Oman to sell parts of them. In the time of Hajj (pilgrimage season) they sailed to the Jeddah and Hijaz coasts to sell their fish there. It is possible to imagine that the fishermen of southern Mesopotamia (Ubaid people) were working in the opposite part of the Eastern Arabian Peninsula coast where the fish ovulated, and then they stayed for several months to salt and dry their fish. Potts (2003a) suggests this is why perhaps Ubaid pottery is found in the Eastern

Arabian Peninsula. In such an interpretation, the movement of pottery is secondary – almost a by-product of other activities such as fishing. Given the ubiquity of Ubaid pottery in Kuwait, Syria and Iran, I think it is unlikely that this explanation sufficiently covers all pottery movements in these regions.

Furthermore, sheep and cattle bones found at H3 may be a residue of the people who worked with herding or husbandry animals. Some gazelle bones were found with cutmarks in the same site suggesting that the people at that time were hunting animals (Beech 2010, 129). Large quantities of fish bones were also found at the site with fishing equipment, such as stone net or line sinkers, circular disks and bone gorges (Carter and Crawford 2001, 4). Cattle bones were discovered, but so far without butchery cutmarks. This is mostly due to the extremely poor preservation of the bone material, or it may suggest that cattle were used more for milk, blood or maybe status or social purpose. For example, Whittle (2003) stated that looking after cattle in the Nuer and Dinka societies from east Africa was predominantly a male activity. Tandury men and women both keep cattle but the main tasks such as getting them to pasture, returning them home to the fold and exchanging them were just for boys and men (see also Parker Pearson 2000, 217-32).

In these societies, social status and prestige are also linked to cattle numbers. Might a similar social framework have existed for the Ubaid? The most common fish bones are shark, catfish, grouper, sea-bream, needlefish and cuttlefish (see Figure 3.24). Most of these fish can be caught in shallow water but cuttlefish can also be caught in deep water (Carter and Crawford 2001, 4-5). This suggests that people were fishing and maybe seafaring. The key question is whether this building was used as a seasonal camp or as permanent settlement. H3 contains a lot of otoliths (ear bone) from sea catfish. Recent investigations by the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research

(KISR) have been conducted to search for the taxonomy and identification of recent sea catfish in the waters of Kuwait to investigate their growth, reproduction and to separate otoliths from both modern and archaeological samples. Six archaeological otoliths samples were prepared. The results suggest that some people from H3 were fishing in the summer (Beech 2010, 151). This might again supports that it was a seasonal camp

Regarding the architecture at H3, Carter (2010, 32) reported that it could represent a link between Ubaid routes in Mesopotamia and Arabia. The structure of H3 is not unparalleled. It is similar to semi-permanent houses of pastoralists whether in northern or southern Arabia. For example, the Shagra site in Qatar is a small cellular structure measuring about 5 x 3m to 2.8 x 1.7m. It is similar to area G at H3. The stones of the wall in H3 are built directly on top of each other. In Shagra architecture walls are created by a vertical slab technique (Carter and Crawford 2003, 81).

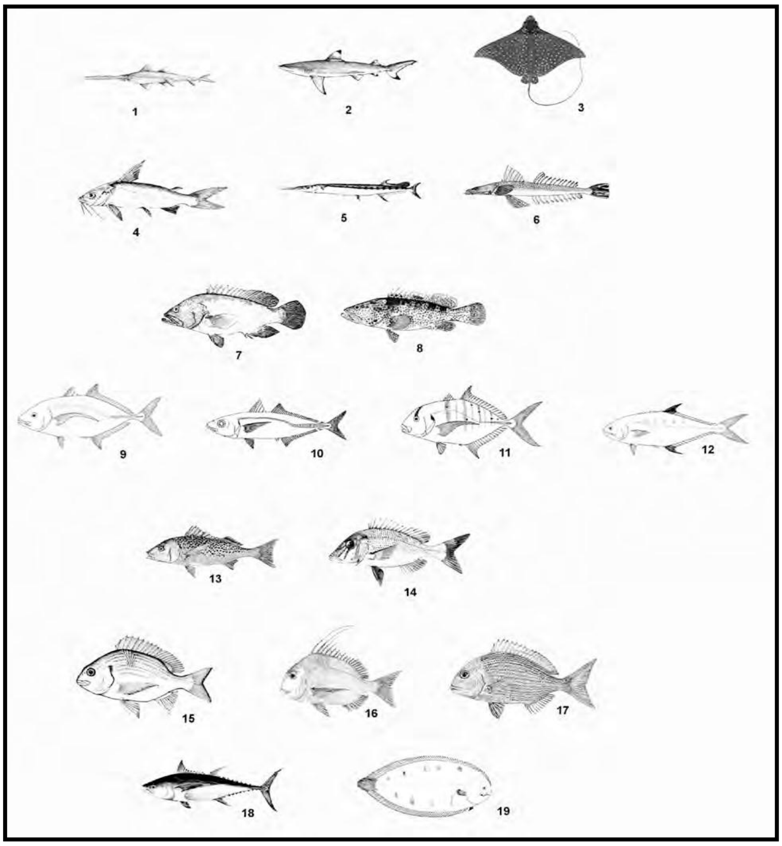


Figure.3.24. Photograph showing Fish at H3: 1) sawfish (Pristidae); 2) requiem shark (Carcharhinidae); 3) eagle ray (Myliobatidae); 4) seacatfish (Ariidae); 5) needlefish (Belonidae); 6)Flathead (Platycephalidae); 7) Hind (Serranidae: Cephalopholis sp.) ; 8) Grouper (Serranidae: Epinephelus sp.); 9) Jack (Carangidae: Carangoides sp.), 10) Scad (Carangidae: Decapterus sp.); 11) Golden trevally (Carangidae: Gnathanodon speciosus); 12) Queenfish (Carangidae: Scomberoides sp.); 13) Grunt (Haemulidae: Pomadasys sp.);14) Emperor (Lethrinidae); 15) Seabream (Sparidae: Acanthopagrus sp.); 16) King soldierbream (Sparidae: Argyrops spinifer); 17) Goldstriped/Haffara seabream (Sparidae: Rhabdosargus sp.); 18) tuna (Scombridae – Thunninae); 19) Sole (Soleidae). (Carter and Crawford 2010, 139)

The twentieth century Mehri cattle pastoralist sites discussed by Zarins (1992), especially those in Dhofar, southern Oman and eastern Yemen, are very comparable to the H3 structures in that there are similar sized cells/rooms, in what is described as an organic style (Carter and Crawford 2010, 32), meaning, that there was no predetermined ground-plan, and the building grew and developed over time. This is another reason why houses may have been considered as living entities in their own right (see earlier discussions). Furthermore, there has recently been discovered a new Neolithic site on Marawah Island in Abu Dhabi, which is very similar to the H3 plan.

The site name is MR11 and Ubaid pottery was found (see Figures 3.25 and 3.26). It has at least three rooms with rounded ends (Beech *et al*. 2008, 32-4).



Figure 3.25. Photograph showing the structure of the Marawah site (Beech 2008, 33).



Figure 3.26. Photograph showing the main trench at the end of the excavations, 2002 (Crawford 2002).

Carter and Crawford (2003) reported that the flints and bitumen found in H3 were brought by some of the H3 people. Perhaps they brought them during their movements through the landscape. They migrated from one region to another, and came back to this area again, and rebuilt this architecture. The Mesopotamian materials or commodities which were found in the site are perhaps the result of gift exchange.

Large quantities of bitumen were found at H3. Most of them have reed impressions on one side and barnacles on the other (see Figure 3.27). It is possible that this bitumen comes from Oman (Carter and Crawford 2002, 9). This bitumen was compared with bitumen slab from the Bronze Age sea-going boats Ras al-Jinz in Oman (Cleuziou and Tosi 2000, 55-70), but this site was dated to the second half of the third millennium BC, some two and half millennium later than H3. From textual sources in Mesopotamia, it is suggested that bitumen was used over reed-bundles in boat construction. It is strongly possible that H3 bitumen quantities are seafaring reed-bundle boat remains. Although Carter and Crawford (2002, 9) suggest this bitumen comes from Oman, it seems more likely that it was sourced locally in Kuwait – possibly the Burgan field due to the ease in which it can be obtained there (see also Chapter 5 here).

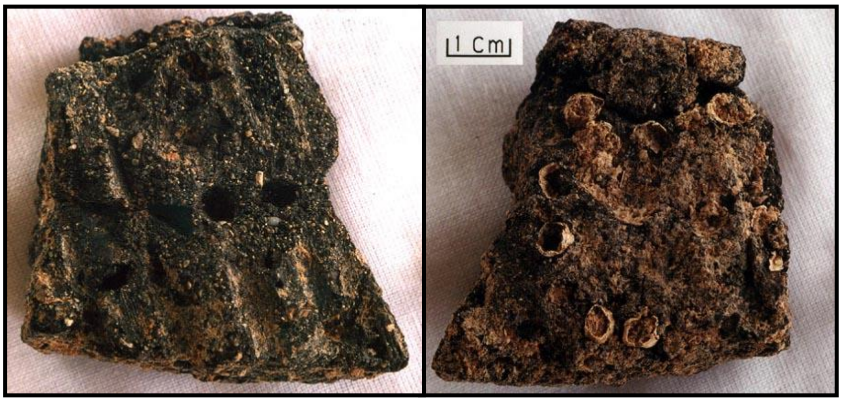


Figure 3.27.Bitumen slab has reed impressions and on the other side has barnacles (Carter and Crawford 2003, 45).

A small model boat was found at H3 in the wall of chamber 15 (see Figure 3.28). It is about 14.5cm long, 7cm wide and 5cm high. It is made of a medium-coarse red ceramic, maybe the local coarse red ware. The boat was compared with the finds that have been made in Ubaid in Mesopotamia and the Ubaid site in northeast Syria, named Tell al-Mashnaqa, and it appears to be similar to al-Mashnaqa boat (see Figure 3.29). We do not know what the purpose of this boat was. It has a flat bottom, which might suggest that it was a vessel for water or a children's toy or a votive sign of protection for travellers (Carter 2002, 21).

The question here is why people made miniature things. Cochrane (2007) noted that miniaturisation can involve creating smaller copies of larger objects, be it jewellery, weapons, pottery, beads, figures of animals. These smaller copies were often not just for one purpose as some might suggest. People can be emotionally bonded with objects because humans explore surroundings with all their senses - touch, look, smell, checking texture. They name things, they like certain things or do not - some object recalls memories, places, other times and so on. He stated that some researchers have pointed out that those objects were created to develop certain feelings in other people (e.g. alienation, empowerment, amusement). The emotional states apply to people who created them and to people who interacted with them. It is not just about their material value but about having emotional value for their owners, and because our feelings are unique to each person, experiences and perception of certain things will always be different.



Figure 3.28. Photograph showing H3 boat (Carter and Crawford 2003, 46).



Figure 3.29. Photograph showing Tell al-Mashnaqa boat (Crawford 2002).

Pottery fragments were found during the 2002 excavations, including a drawing of a boat, which appears to have two masts. It is similar to the H3 boat (see Figure 3.30). It is suggested that the two ‘masts’ are in fact a single bipod mast (Carter and Crawford 2003, 46). This prevalent boat manufacture was used for the vessels that have weak frames to support the socket of a single mast (Vosmer 2000, 240).



Figure 3.30. Photograph showing pottery sherd with boat image (Carter and Crawford 2003, 86).

3.3 Conclusion

The pottery found along the Eastern Arabian Peninsula indicates that there was exchange or a type of organised gift-giving between both the south and north of the Arabian Gulf. There were quantities of bitumen found in some sites in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula and Mesopotamia, besides the presence of bitumen in the Ain As-Sayh site, suggesting that the people of Mesopotamia imported bitumen from the south of the Arabian Gulf. On the other hand, it is possible that the people of Mesopotamia exported the pottery itself to Eastern Arabia Peninsula and the people of the Eastern Arabian Peninsula mimicked Ubaid pottery via local pottery. This could explain the large quantities of Ubaid pottery along the Eastern Arabian Peninsula. The obsidian, which was found at H3, perhaps came from western Arabia or from Yemen, indicating there were routes between the south and north of the Arabian Peninsula. In addition, the Arabian Gulf is well known to have large quantities of pearls, and as we know that the rivers are poor in pearl oysters, it is possible that the people of

Mesopotamia were sailing to the Arabian Gulf to exchange commodities such as mother of pearl and beads. The large quantities of beads, shells, and ornaments, found at H3 suggest that the people might have been working in network exchange of beads and shells. In addition, the presence of fish bones indicates that some of these people may have been seafaring, although most of fish were of a species that can be caught in shallow water. All of these artifacts and remains may be proof that there was exchange of ideas, ceramics and other objects between Mesopotamia and the Eastern Arabian Peninsula through the Ubaid period.

Many archaeologists agree that the Ubaid sites in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula are seasonal or temporary sites for hunters or nomadic people (e.g. Potts 2003a: Masry 1997). Perhaps H3 began as a non-permanent residency, with structures being replaced and added to over time – in an organic fashion. Here the H3 plan is similar to a lot of the sites in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula. The modern history of the Arabian Gulf indicates that some groups of nomads (Bedouins) have seasonal activities for maintenance, practicing herding sheep and camels in the spring, fishing in the winter and pearl-diving in the summer (Mahjūb 1973, 108-115; al-Shamlan 1986b, 379-80). In so doing, they work side by side with the people of the city or the neighbouring village which was located adjacent to the sea (see also Thesiger 1964).

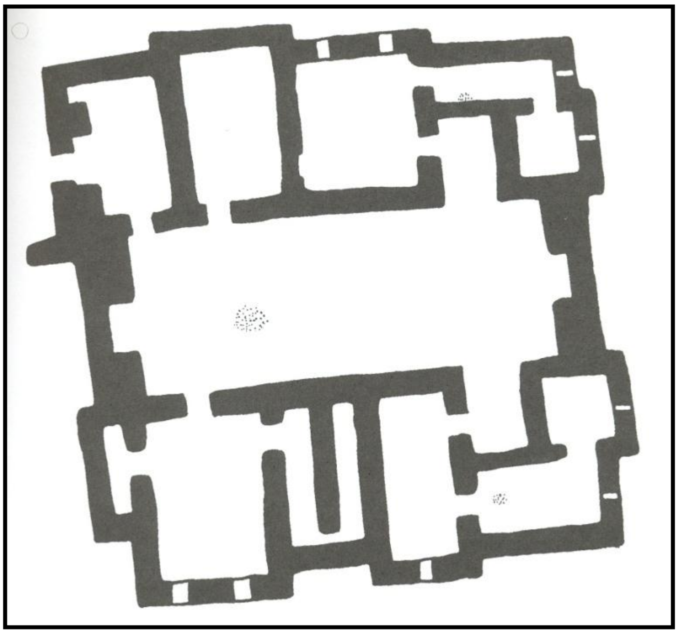


Figure 3.31. Plan showing the Tell Madhur house (Pollock 1999, 49).

The pearl trade was the important resource before oil was discovered in the Arabian Gulf. It is possible to interpret H3 being created by a group of nomads who inhabited seasonally and restored or added new rooms when required. Reasons for this might include needing more space to accommodate a larger family. That H3 is adjacent to the Ubaid sites (camps or semi-permanent villages) recently discovered in Sabbiyah could support this idea. Bielinski (2009) reported that site SBH38 is similar to Tell Abada and Tell Madhur, which is an Ubaid site in the east of the River Dayal in Iraq (see Figure 3.31). He suggests that Mesopotamian people came to this land and built their temples and houses. These new discoveries regarding the Ubaid in Kuwait could change traditional narratives for the Ubaid in the Arabian Gulf region. For example, Masry (1997) suggests that the Ubaid originally came from the Arabian Peninsula but with these new discoveries it seems probable that they came from Kuwait. Moreover, the new discoveries could indicate that Kuwait became one of the Ubaid centres later in the Ubaid 2/3 periods. The new Ubaid sites in Kuwait prove

that Kuwait was a trade centre where objects (such as shell, bitumen and pottery) were exchanged with Mesopotamia and that this occurred on a seasonal basis. Afterwards, pottery and shell beads were exchanged with other areas in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the Stone Age (predominantly Neolithic) in Kuwait to illustrate Kuwait's earliest known human activities. Furthermore, I presented the Ubaid in Mesopotamia. I considered the Kuwaiti Ubaid sites in detail and in the light of recent discoveries. Also, I examined Ubaid distributions in northern and southern Mesopotamia. This information was presented to illustrate that Kuwait was settled in ancient times and had close interactions with its neighbours. These settlements and relations will continue for thousands of years as we will see in the next chapters.

Chapter 4

4.1 The burial mound phenomenon

Why did some people in Kuwait start building burial mounds? Why were the traditional flat graves suddenly ignored? Where did the builders and users live? Do burial mounds indicate connections between Kuwait and the wider Arabian Gulf or are they a more localised tradition? In answering these questions, I will discuss the phenomenon of the burial mounds, which are most common in the western parts of the Arabian Gulf. There are many burial mounds spread around the Arabian Gulf, but there is not adequate space to mention them all here. Thus, I will discuss areas in the north of Kuwait containing burial mounds, such as Kadhima, al-Radha, al-Nahdain, Bahra, Mughairah and Dubaij. I will select particular graves and discuss in depth their archaeological data, such as the skeletal analyses. I will compare Kuwaiti burial mounds with others in the Arabian Gulf to highlight the similarities and differences between their forms. In addition, I will analyse whether the burial mounds in the Euphrates Valley are similar to the burial mounds in the Arabian Gulf. In doing so, I will seek out whether the nomadic people who lived in these areas, had similar religions, ideas and customs, as expressed by their constructions.

The burial mounds in Kuwait are from a variety of different periods. The first occur within the very late Ubaid period (3500BC), and through to the Jamdat Nasr (3200 - 2900BC), the Bronze Age (2400 - 1200BC), and finally in the Hellenistic period (330 - 150BC). The oldest known record of Kuwait cemeteries was written by J. G. Lorimer who worked with the British government in India between 1903-15. He wrote a historical and geographical encyclopedia entitled, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, where he described limestone cists in the Adan Province.

In this province the graves are mostly on the western sides of the Burgan field, with an orientation of east to west (with indicates that they are not Islamic burials). They are often located on high ground, with dimensions generally being: 1.5m x 20cm x 70cm**.** The wall thickness of the cists are about 10.16cm and are often deeply buried under-ground (*c*. 1m deep), covered with stones, and without any inscriptions. The Kuwaiti archaeological team discovered in southern Kuwait more burial mounds in 2003 but at the time of writing they remain unexcavated. This suggests unfortunately that perhaps this area contained a lot more graves that were removed when the government began building its modern cities (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2004, 2).

Al-Resheed (1999, 38) reported that he saw in the She'aibah area, which is located in the south of Kuwait, some graves that had ancient footprints on them and which did not resemble present-day tombs. He also pointed out that there are some similar graves in Jahra. According to Bibby (1985, 278), in the eastern part of Failaka Island, there are some piles of earth and stone on a small number of plateaux, which are similar to the Bahrain and Qatar graves in appearance (see discussions below). The Kuwaiti and French archaeological teams conducted an archaeological survey in Failaka Island in 1999 but they did not find any evidence for graves (al-Duweesh, al-Mutairi and Salem 2004, 13).

It should be mentioned that the Danish archaeological team, at the beginning of its work in Kuwait (1957-63), had previously conducted a survey of two areas (Sabbiyah and Kadhima) and they did not discover any settlements or burial mounds in the region (Glob 2003, 168). It is possible that the archaeological sites were beneath the sand at that time, with the wind and the rain movements, revealing them at a later date.

All the excavated burial mounds discovered to date are located in the northern part of Kuwait. It is within an area of highlands called the Jal al-Zur (see Chapter 2). The eastern part of the area is semi-circular in shape and is located on the coast of Kuwait Bay. It is surrounded by mud-flats where the burial mounds spread between the tops of the Jal al-Zur Mountains, and coastal plain terraces, which was used by some people to bury their dead (al-Duweesh 2005, 14-5).

The archaeological surveys and excavations of the burial mounds was begun in 1999 by the Kuwaiti archaeological team, who first discovered them. Later, other archaeological teams, such as The Arabian Gulf, the British and the Polish teams started their excavations, with many of these continuing to this day. There are more than 1,000 burial mounds in Sabbiyah area, the large majority remaining unexcavated (see Figure 4.1,and 4.2).

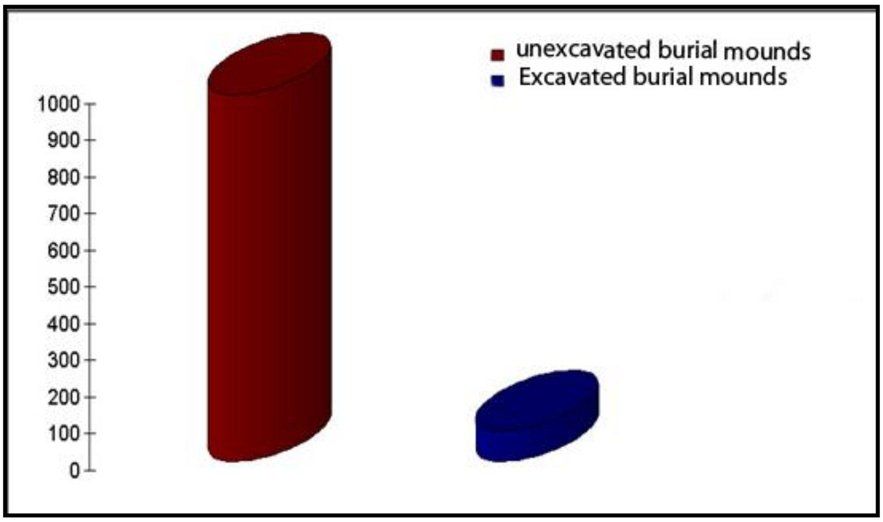


Figure 4.1. Chart showing unexcavated and excavated burial mounds in Kuwait (al-Duweesh 2010a, 35).

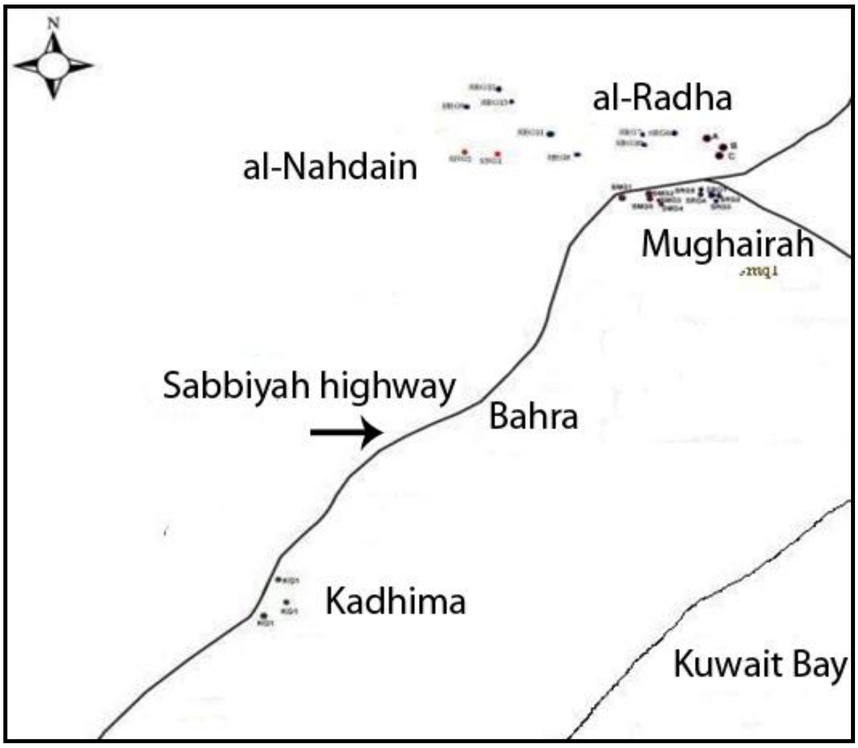


Figure 4.2. Map showing the distribution of Burial mounds in Kuwait (al-Duweesh 2010a, 38).

The Kadhima graves are located about 14km to the north of al-Jahra. In 2002 three of the graves were excavated. This work produced impressive results, which help explain the design and construction of the burial mounds in Kuwait. It also revealed for the first time a full prehistoric skeleton in Kuwait. This burial is in the Kadhima area (*KG1* grave), and is located in Area C of the Kadhima settlement about 0.2km from the highway coming from al-Jahra towards the Sabbiyah area. The mound takes an oval shape to the north and has a diameter of 40.6m northeast and 70.6m southwest. The grave was built on a hill. They used the composition of the hill to form a natural basal platform for building the grave. It is possible that the mound is also positioned to enhance the visual impact of the hill itself, and its natural topography (e.g. Cochrane 2005). The burial chamber is located in the middle of the hill. It takes a semi-circular shape measuring 2.4m x 2.6m x 0.80m. Its depth is divided into three sections. There is a complete skeleton in the northwest corner of the burial chamber. It

rested in a foetal position on its right side (see Figure 4.3). The direction of burial is such that the head is towards the southwest, the legs towards the northeast and the face towards the east (see further discussions below). At a depth of 0.78m from the northwest side of the burial chamber was found a piece of burnt animal bone. The outer wall of the burial chamber was built on a high hill. Its height is about 5.1m. It takes an oval shape, with red sandstones used to build the wall, consisting of three to four rows of stone (al-Duweesh *et al* 2004, 4).

Layers of debris indicate that the tomb was destroyed several times. The archaeological team has not found the rocks that originally covered the grave. It became clear that a large proportion of the sand that was removed is soft sand from later periods. There was also a layer of fine sand that formed a mattress, free of impurities that had been dropped on the rocky ground, on which they placed the body eventually covering it with another layer of sand (al-Duweesh 2005, 18).



Figure 4.3. Photograph showing the KG1 burial mound (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 12).

The *KG3* grave is located to the south of the KG1 hill. It has been damaged, possibly by grave robbers. The grave takes an oval shape. It was built over a small hill and the outer wall consists of two layers of sandstone with a diameter of 7m north to south and 30.6m east to west. The burial chamber is located in the middle which takes a circular shape with a diameter of 1.7m. It has paving stones and at a depth of 0.30m the archaeological team found an adult skeleton in a squatting position lying on the right side its face to the north its head towards the east and its feet toward the west. Most of its parts have been analysed. Preliminary inspection suggests the skeleton is female. There were no other findings (al-Duweesh 2005, 19).

4.2 **Al-Radha area**

Al-Radha area is situated next to the highway which comes from al-Jahra. The site has a group of burial mounds and they take different shapes and sizes spread over the high land. To the north the hill is surrounded by flat and plain land which is dotted with desert plants. To the south the hills are surrounded by low land (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 10).This means that the hills are visible from a considerable distance on approach, whilst also providing commanding vistas over the surrounding landscape, when one is on the summit (see also Cochrane 2005).

In 1999, The Kuwaiti archaeological team began excavating in al-Radha, the Gulf archaeological team conducted excavations in this region from 2004 to 2005. It has revealed a number of graves. *SRG1* (Sabbiyah - al-Radha - Grave) is a hill located on the edge of a small valley from the east side and from the southwest of the paved road which comes from al-Jahra heading to the Bubiyan Island. The surface of the site was covered with a soft layer of sand. The hill grave consists of a circular wall and the burial chamber is located in the middle of the wall. It has an oval shape (see Figure 4.4). Here, circularity in form may represent a common belief system. For example,

Bradley (1998) discusses the circular forms during the Neolithic in Ireland (e.g. Co. Meath), such as the wooden palisades, the stone passage tombs, the stone circles, the engraved art-forms, the house structures and the pottery forms. Bradley (1998) argues that circular burial forms relate to understandings of a circular based cosmology – it is possible that the circular or sub-oval form at SRG1 and many other sites (e.g. SRG4 and SRG6/A) represents similar beliefs. There was a collapse in the burial chamber and there is a hole in the middle. The circular wall measures 13m in diameter from north to south and 5.12m from east to west. It was built from sandstone which consists of three to four closed layers (al-Duweesh 2010a, 112). The first burial layer used after completion of the burial chamber has been filled with a deposit of mud to encase the rock tomb and cover the distance between the burial chamber and the circular wall. This was followed by a second layer of sand mixed with gravel and a deposit of fine sand brought in from the same environment (al-Duweesh 2005, 21). The grave was therefore not accessible after initial burial.

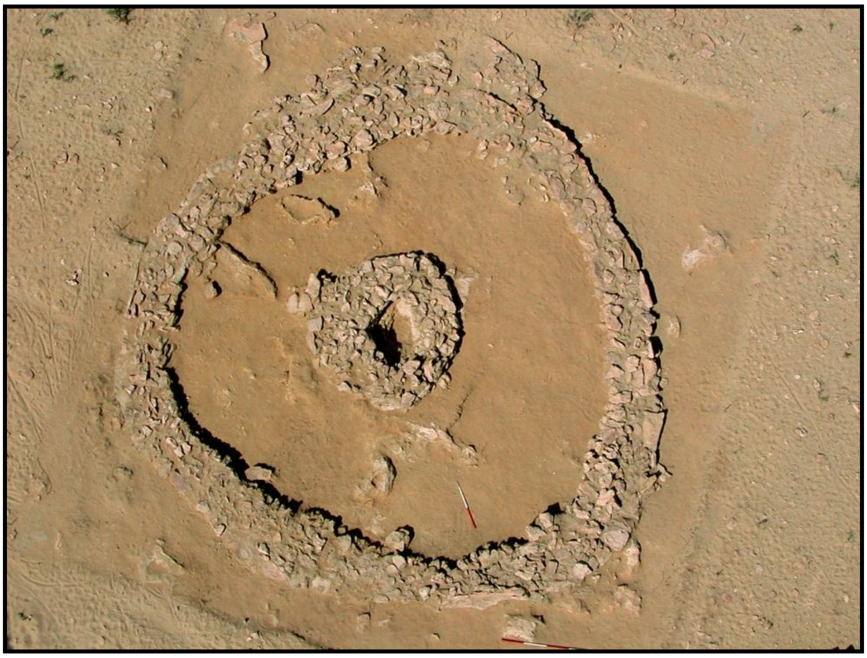


Figure 4.4. Photograph showing the SRG1 grave (al-Duweesh 2010a, 112).

SRG4 grave is one a simple and circular grave. Its is about 60cm high and 90.4m in diameter from the south to the north, and 5m from the east to the west. Again, a defining feature is its rounded shape. The outer wall consists of two rows of stone and the burial chamber is located in the middle. It has an oval shape with a depth of 50cm and it measures 140 x 90cm in diameter. The direction of the burial chamber is to the northeast and it was built of sandstone, which was trimmed and made randomly, and there are no building materials between the rocks. In this hill the team found 60 local pieces of shells, beads and ornamental stones (al-Duweesh *et al*. 2004, 11).

SRG6 is located in a prominent position on a flat hill overlooking a wide area of al-Radha. The graves were built on the second series of the Jal al-Zur Mountains. The team divided the hills into several parts:

SRG6/A, in this grave the sands almost cover the burial features except a small part of a prominent circular wall. Its width is about 1.5m, and there are some paved stones which take a semi-circular shape in the northeastern part. The circular wall measures 0.14m in diameter and is built of sandstone. There are four rows of stone measuring 0.4m in height. The burial chamber is large and oval in shape. It aligns northwest to the southeast and is about 1.6m long and is about 1.30m wide. It is covered in soft sands. The team found a skeleton at a depth of 0.86m in a foetal position and lying on its left side (al-Mutairi 2004, 3). It head was located to the east, the legs to the west and the face towards the north. The skeleton had some parts of the chest and pelvis missing. Through the preliminary inspection of the head bone, it was thought to be female (see Figure 4.5). The grave was covered with a layer of soft sand, 0.30m thick, and below it covering the rocky ground layer there was a layer 0.1m thick, of soft red sand mixed with limestone rocks. The fill of burial chamber

was composed of two layers, the first layer consisting of soft red sand, 0.68m thick and the second layer, located on the rocky ground, of soft red sand of 0.18m thick. Four pieces of bronze have been found here. When the archaeologists put all of them together, they made a small square (the dimensions are unfortunately not published yet), which may have been used as an ornament (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 46-8).



Figure 4.5. Photograph showing SRG6 burial mound (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 47).

SRG8 is located on the third series of the Jal al-Zur Mountains. It is an oval hill and built on the rocky ground on the sloping edge of the hill. Some of its parts are collapsed. The direction of the burial was toward the southeast / northwest and had a diameter of 1.7m with a height of about 0.60m. The grave contained pieces of shell, bone and iron which were found in a poor condition (al-Duweesh 2005, 21, 24).

SRE was circular in shape, 3m in diameter, and located on the edge of a small hill, about 100m north of the crossroads of the highway. The head of the burial was toward the east and its length from east to west was about 1.3m. The mound seems to be simply built whereas the outer wall consists of two rows of stone and the building rises in the form of a pyramid until it reaches the wall of the burial chamber, which has a circular shape. Its diameter is about 1.2m and its height is about 0.40m. The grave contained pieces of bone and glass beads which were found close to the surface. Al-Duweesh (2008b, 3-5) suggested that the grave had been tampered with in more recent times. When the team was auguring, ornamental tubular seashell tools were discovered. Also grey pottery fragments which look rough and have hub lines were found (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 54).

When the team dug down about 0.20m, they found pieces of bronze almond-shaped beads; at a depth of 0.33m they found 7 pieces of earring made of bronze. At a depth of 0.40m they found earrings of bronze with an almond design and a small sea fossil. Perhaps it was one of nomadic people who have circular migration between Arabian Gulf and Mesopotamia bringing their materials to exchange them with others while migrating. There were three skeletons in the middle of this grave. The bones appeared within different levels and were in a poor condition. This could indicate that the grave was destroyed by thieves (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 55-6).

It is clear that these skeletons were of three adults. The first skeleton’s head was buried towards the north; the legs appeared to the west and the face to the southwest (see Figure 4.6). The head of the second skeleton was located in the east side, the legs to the west and face to the north (al-Duweesh 2005, 25). The bones of the third skeleton were found scattered.



Figure 4.6. Photograph showing the SRE burial mound (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 54).

4.3 **Al-Nahdain area:**

Al-Nahdain is the most important area in the Sabbiyah region. It has many diverse burial mounds. It starts at a group of valleys at the top of the Jal al-Zur Mountains and to the low area called Bahra. The Sabbiyah highway divides this area into two sections. The northern side is called al-Nahdain and the southern side is called Umghati (al-Duweesh, al-Mutairi and Salem 2004, 23).

SNG1 (Sabbiyah - al-Nahdain - Grave): This grave was shaped like an old pottery kiln. There are two courses of stones measuring about 0.21m in height, which represents part of the wall. This is the first type of burial of its kind found in the Sabbiyah region. The burial chamber was rectangular and located in the centre of the circle. The excavations worked to remove the surface layer of soft sand to a depth of about 0.05m, and then removed blocks of rock which may have been covering the collapsed grave mouth. At a depth of 0.20m a part of the wall was discovered in the southern side. During the excavation there was a defining feature that stood out from the western side. Its length was about 0.55m, width 0.40m and depth 0.8m. (al-Duweesh 2005, 26-27). From the eastern side its length was about 0.45m, width 0.32m and depth 0.10m. It was a basin of stones intersecting with the burial chamber to give a cross shaped plan. These graves are similar to the tombs of the Yabrīn Oasis in the east of Saudi Arabia which were discovered by the Danish archaeological team in 1968 and dated back to the middle of the Bronze Age (1500BC) (al-Duweesh 2005, 1-3).

SNG8 differs from other graves. It has irregular rows of stones on the surface, possibly representing collapse (see Figure 4.7). The structural stones form rectangular plan shape. Its width is about 60cm. It is also noted that there are some stones that are distributed like pillars at this tomb. The circular wall was built of limestone and sand. It consists of four to five courses of stones and has a diameter of 8m (al-Duweesh 2010a, 131).

The burial chamber is located in the centre of the circular wall with a diameter of 4m, length of 0.13m and width of 0.90m. It is well built from rows of stone. The burial layer consists of a yellow soft layer of sand and its thickness is about 0.70m. The second layer, which lies between the burial chamber and the circular wall, is a block of stones of different sizes with yellow sand and soft soil. Human bone was found at a depth of 0.20-0.70m (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 37-8).

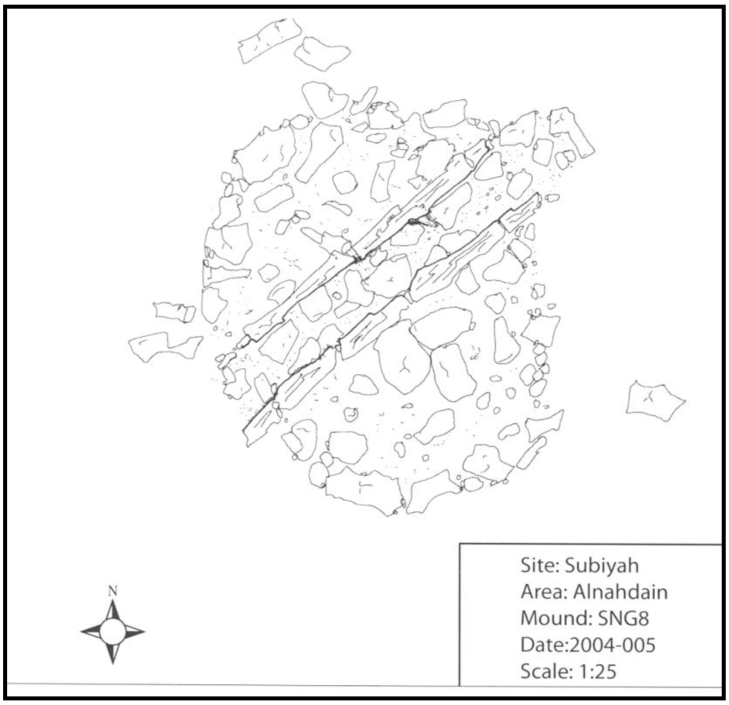


Figure 4.7. Photograph showing the SNG8 burial mound (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 98).

4.4 Bahra area

Bahra area is located to the southern edge of al-Nahdain. It forms a low area extending to the right and the left of the Sabbiyah highway. In this area many burial mounds have been discovered (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 40). I will discuss two key examples.

SBH1 (Sabbiyah – Bahra) is located on the edge of a small valley and is about 600m away from the Sabbiyah highway. The internal structure is medium sized and rectangular in shape, resembling a cist. Its length is about 12.8m, width 2.3m with a height of 0.40m. It could be that it is not a grave as there is no burial chamber, or burial (see Figure 4.8). It was probably used for religious rites or due to its circular shape, had cosmological meanings. The external walls of the mound were built of a single row of limestone which stand vertically, and is supported by sandy stones placed diagonally to protect it from falling (Ibrahiam 2004, 1).



Figure 4.8. Photograph showing the SBH1 burial mound (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 41).

SBH2 is located to the south of the Sabbiyah highway. It is a large mound with a cylindrical structure. It has an average height of 1.4m and measures 7.7m from north to south and 9.2m from east to west. A circular wall surrounds the grave (see Figure 4.9).

The burial chamber has an oval shaped pit, is medium sized and directs slightly to the north, where the walls were built on the ground of the soft sand which consists of seven courses of limestone. Human bones have been found in several parts of this grave (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 42-3).

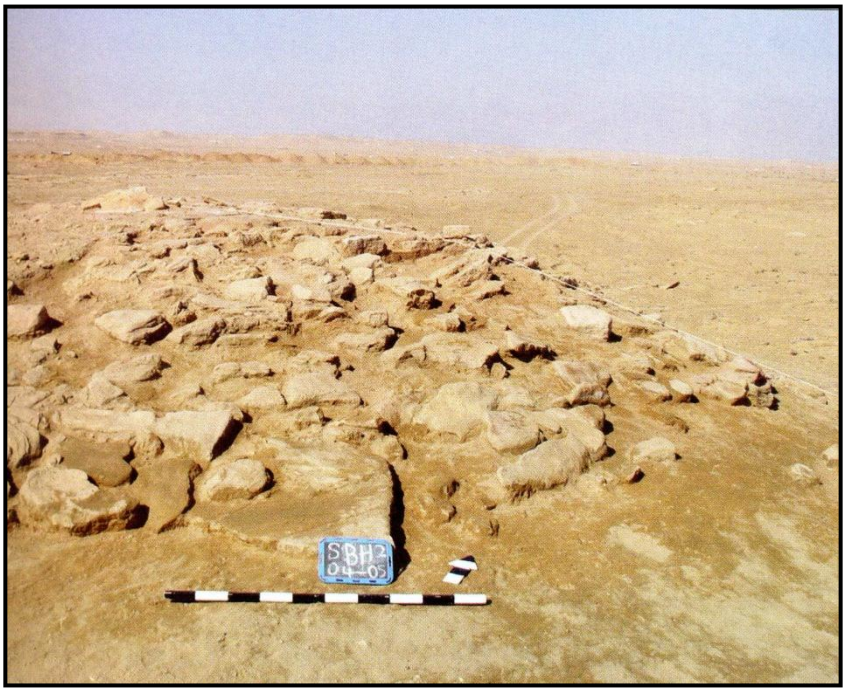


Figure 4.9. Photograph showing the SBH2 burial mound (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 42).

4.5 Mughairah area

Mughairah area is located in the north eastern part of the Sabbiyah area (see Figure 4.10). It is a very famous area, especially in recent years, as it is close to Dubaij Island, which contains the important archaeological site know as H3 (see Chapter 3) This site was excavated by the British and Kuwaiti archaeological teams through several seasons, from 1999 to 2003 (al-Duweesh 2005, 30).

The teams chose the western side of the Mughairah area which has 14 cemeteries to begin excavating. The western side is located on the edge of the sloping part of the Jal al-Zur Mountains (al-Duweesh 2010a, 39). Unfortunately, there is not enough space to mention all of these cemeteries, but I will choose two of them which have been found in good condition.

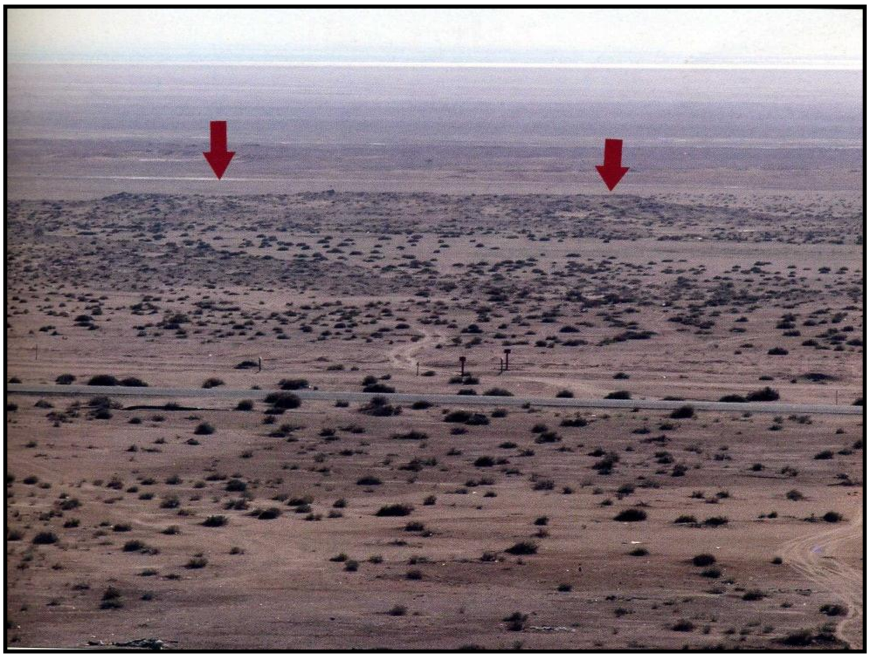


Figure 4.10. Photograph showing the burial mounds in the Mughairah area (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 16).

SMQ2 (Sabbiyah -Mughairah) has a rectangular shape from north to south (see Figure 4.11). It has large stones and is built vertically. Perhaps it indicates the large walls of a settlement. It is about 7.55m long and is 1.53m wide in the north, and 1m in the south. The height is about 0.15m. There is an aperture on the east side with a width of about 0.60m. The burial chamber has a conical shape (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 19).

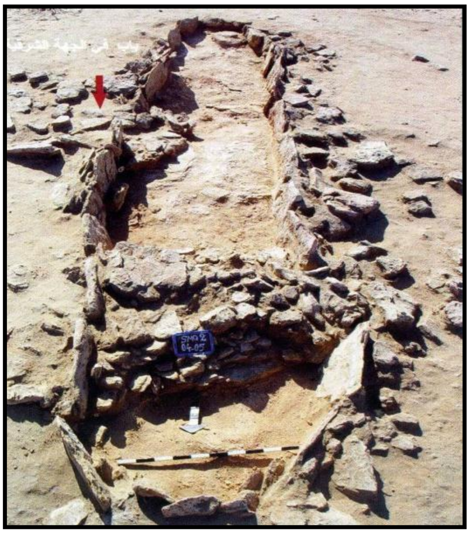


Figure 4.11. Photograph showing SMQ2 burial mound (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 19).

SMQ11 is located on a low hill and has a circular shaped pit with a circular wall (see Figure 4.12). Its height is about 0.12m. It is covered by a layer of red sand with small and medium sized red limestone rocks. With a diameter of 7m, the structure consists of two rows of limestone, which have been built in a horizontal plan. The burial chamber is located in the centre of the circular wall. Its diameter is about 2.9m from the east to the west, and 2.8m from north to south, and its wall width is around 0.95m. The burial chamber is about 0.80m away from the circular wall. Found within the grave was a cylindrical stone with a flat base, which was probably used as hammer (al-Naseri 2005, 10-2).

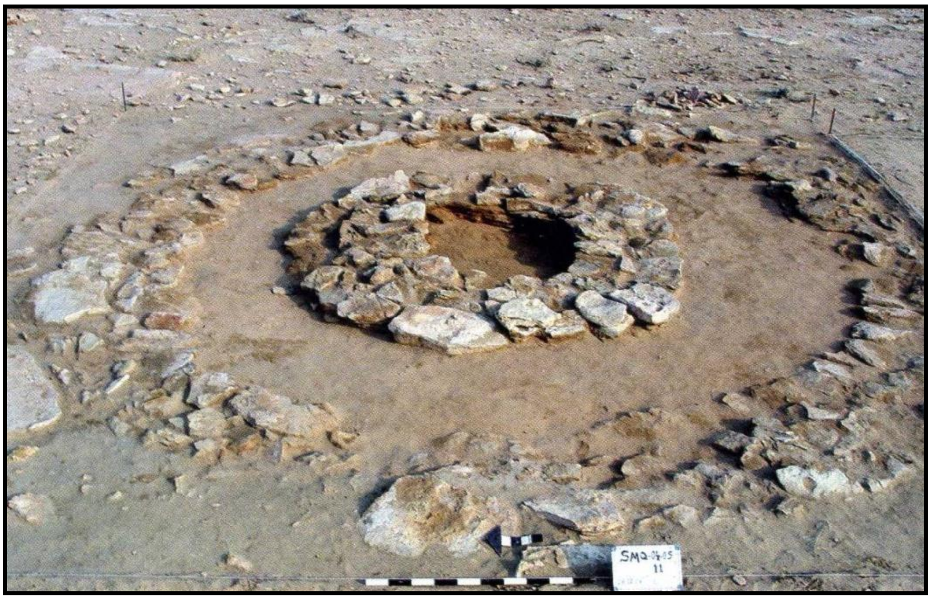


Figure 4.12. Photograph showing the SMQ11 burial mound (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 27).

4.6 **Dubaij area**

This burial mound is located opposite Dubaij Island (see Figure 4.13). It is on a lower part of the Jal al-Zur Mountains (Abbas and al-Duweesh 2006, 2). *SB19* is the only mound that the British archaeological team has excavated (this happened in 1999). The aim of the excavation was to find if there was a link between this hill and the Ubaid site of H3 (see Chapter 3). On the northern edge of the hill there is a rectangular structure. Its length is about 40.6m from north to south and its width is about 60.1m from east to west. It has an entrance about 1m wide in the west side. Found in this site were pieces of animal bones and sea shells (Carter 2004, 11).

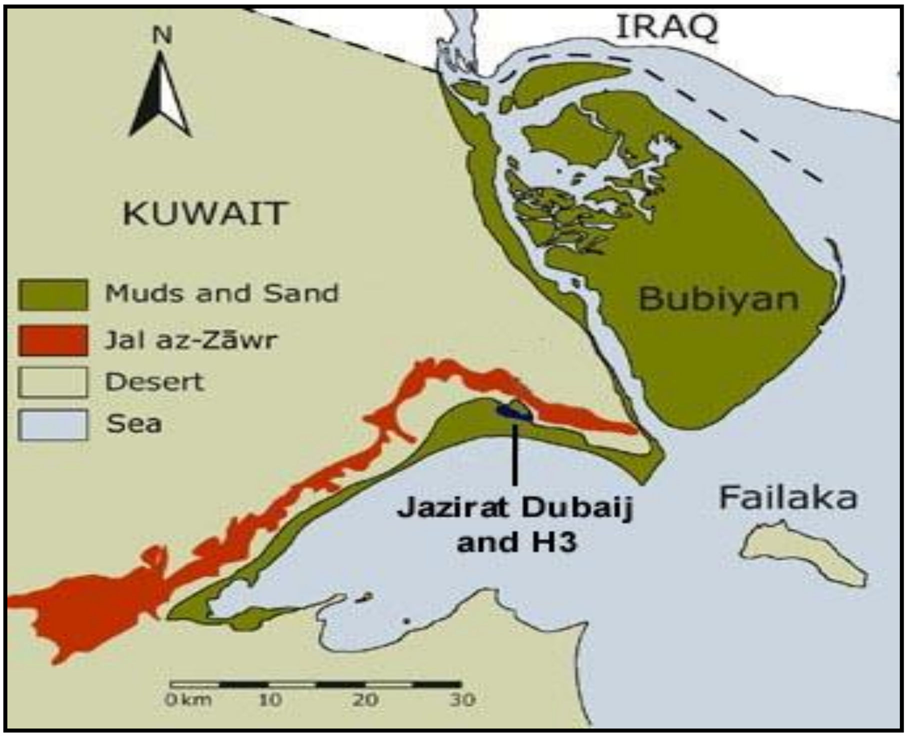


Figure 4.13.Map showing Dubaij area location (Crawford 2002).

4.7 The most important finds in the burial mounds are as follows:

Beads

Thousands of beads were found in the site of *SM17*. The tablet shape is the most common bead in the burial mounds, made of shell or coral which are widespread in the Arabian Gulf, especially on the Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates shores (Khraysheh and al-Nashef 2007, 141).

Lapis lazuli

Lapis lazuli and gold were probably important and expensive materials in the past. Lapis lazuli was used for disease treatment such as, eye diseases and snake bites. Six pieces of Lapis lazuli were found in *SMQ30* (see Figure 4.14). Note that the Arabian Gulf does not have Lapis lazuli; it comes from Afghanistan. This may indicate evidence for long-distance exchange (Khattab 2004, 50-51).

At present, however, there has been no isotope analysis – and it is also unknown how the Lapis lazuli was used.



Figure 4.14. Photograph showing different finds from SMQ30 (al-Duweesh 2010a, 359).

Pearl

Two pearl beads were found in *SMQ30* (al-Duweesh 2010a, 170).

Pottery

A red Jar has been found in *SBHG17*. It has a circular shape, with a missing base. This jar is very famous, dating to 3200 - 2900BC (known in Iraq as the Jamdat Nasr period). Moreover, two fragments of pottery were found in *SRA*, dating to Jamdat Nasr, and these fragments are similar to the others found in the Hafit site in the United Arab Emirates. Furthermore, Persian pottery was found in *SBH1*, and a Hellenistic jar was found in *SRC* in 1999, dating to the third and the second century BC. It is similar to one jar that was found in the Hellenistic fortress site in Failaka Island. This indicates that this burial mound may have been reused in the Hellenistic period (see Chapter 6). Also four pottery fragments were found near Umghati dating to the

Bronze Age. Moreover, pottery fragments have been found in *SBH29* dating to the Ubaid period (al-Duweesh 2010a, 171).

Metals

There are lots of metal objects found in different burial mounds, made from a variety of materials such as bronze, copper, silver and iron (al-Duweesh 2010a, 170).

Animal bones

There are lots of animal bones found in several graves such as, cow, horse or donkey, rabbit and jerboa (al-Duweesh 2010a, 180).

Stone tools

Found in *SMQ49* were fragments of flint, possibly from a knife; the most notable finds were domestic grinding stones, which date to the third millennium BC (Bieliński 2007, 7). Similar objects have been found in the Umm al-Nar site in the United Arab Emirates (Abdul-Na‘im 1999, 407).

4.8 **Discussion**

There are common characteristics between the Sabbiyah area and the Kadhima graves. When some people chose to build graves, they did not choose the high positions of the Jal al-Zur Mountains. They chose instead the edges of mountain slopes to prevent the graves from collapsing, and perhaps to project a visual dominance or for astronomical reasons. For example, Rice (2002) stated that the graves were built on the top of hills in Oman possibly to emphasize the horizon. Certainly this feature of highlighting of horizons is apparent in other periods of world prehistory. For example, in another un-related context, the sun rise at the temple of Pharaoh Ramses in Abu Simbel, Egypt indicates a possible relationship between monument location and particular astronomical features (al-Bailī 2008, 21). Closer in form, the burial mounds of Neolithic Ireland, such as Newgrange in the Boyne valley,

demonstrate solar alignments which may represent cosmological belief systems (O'Kelly 1982; Bradley 1998). That they are circular in shape may also be of importance. They built these stone graves in circular and oval shape pits. Most of them were built in solid stone maybe to avoid collapsing, or because the stone itself was significant. The dry-stone walling building technique proved to be very effective. The orientation of the graves was prominently east to west (al-Duweesh 2005, 16). All of these similarities suggest that these areas may have been used by similar people or people with similar belief systems.

As for the finds, different ornaments have been found in several burial mounds. This perhaps suggests a level of social status, with elites or religious leaders, being present. Parker Pearson (1999) reported that prestigious grave goods can indicate wealthy people. For example the graves which have gold suggest that the people with this were richer than others without it. He stated that the kind of the goods or metals indicate social status**.** Rice (2002) reported that the burial mounds in Oman would indicate that elite people were buried in these graves and that the poorer people were not buried in these mounds but rather in the desert**.** On the other hand, Ikram (1998) noted that the goods which were buried with the body in Ancient Egypt were used for protective functions. They will protect the wearer from evil or give help and magical assistance. It is clear from the existing burial mounds in Kuwait that there are three kinds of burial methods such as, individual burial, double burial and group burial.

Individual burial

Most of the graves are designed to take one body. The majority of these graves have been robbed at a later date as most of them were empty and some of them are found with the bones scattered (al-Duweesh *et al*. 2004, 4). Most of the burial chambers contained one skeleton, in the foetal position on the right side, hands and the body bent forward to the chest and abdomen. The direction of burial was always to the east and west. Often the burial chambers have an oval or circular shape. The example of this model is *KG1* grave (al-Duweesh 2010a, 157).

Double burial

This type of grave has more than one person; either buried at one time or a re-use of the burial space. This type differs from the normal method of burial because it pushes the bones to the end of the grave. Often characteristic of this practice is the discovery of a large pile of bones pushed back and buried by the later body. Thus we can distinguish the number of cases of burial by counting the number of skeletons or the number of skulls which are found in the chamber. The reason for re-use is either because of kinship between the people buried or for economic factors. For example, perhaps people did not have enough resources to have a new grave (al-Wohaibi 1999, 3). The typical burial in the third millennium BC is a single burial, and re-using the grave more than once was usually found in the Early Bronze Age, and the Hellenistic period. An example of this type is the *SRC* grave (al-Duweesh 2010a, 160).

Group burial

Some burial chambers contained more than two skeletons such as *SRE* grave and more than three (al-Duweesh 2008b, 1-2). This may be due to social reasons, for example family relations (Taha 2003b, 454).

The skeletons that are found in burial mounds in the Sabbiyah area are in the foetal position. This possibly indicates that religion or belief systems play a role here. Perhaps some people believed their dead would be transferred to another life. Thus they put with them inside the grave, food, ornaments and weapons (al-Sinaidi 2001, 121). Also the direction of burial may be related to beliefs. For example, the sun is one of the many gods that were common in the Arabian Gulf during the Bronze Age (Bushehri 1987, 17-27). Perhaps this gives us the reason for the direction of the head that was found in *KG1*, which is facing the east where the sun rises. On the other hand, it may relate to water, as the Arabian Gulf has spring water wells (al-Bader 1978, 111), and the Gulf is located in the east from the graves. In arid conditions, water may have been regarded as sacred for its life-giving properties.

This method of burial related to the religion in the fifth and fourth millennium BC and Bronze Age. For example, many similar graves are discovered on the mount of Buhais in the United Arab Emirates (Upermann and Jassim 2006, 76). Moreover, the civilisations of Naqada (Spencer 1982, 34) and Badarain buried some of their dead in similar ways (Ibrarhim 1982, 22). Also the Bahrain Dilmun graves (2400 - 300BC) are similar to this burial style (Glob 2003, 141-2; see also Chapter 5). In Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, the graves often reflect similarities in form (al-Mughnim 1987, 215). Whittle (2003) stated that in the early Neolithic of Orkney, positioning as if one was asleep was a significant symbol. The dead body was put in accumulated stone mounds, as if it was just sleeping. This body position was not totally widespread as single graves are also prevalent. Whittle (2003; see also Jones 1999) reported that LBK graves demonstrate several types of body positions. These differences of body positions in death may indicate the way that people slept in longhouses and daily life. Here, body deposition is more about the daily round than the status of a person.

Skeleton analyses:

In 2007, the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters Antiquity Department signed an agreement with the University of Warsaw to study the skeletons. The anthropologist Arkadiusz Sołtysiak studied the findings of the Polish archaeological expedition's excavations in Mughairah area in 2007 and the Kuwaiti archaeological findings as well. Unfortunately, there is insufficient space to mention all of the areas that have been identified but I will choose three of them that had skeletons in a good condition such as, al-Radha, Kadhima and Mughairah. In these areas the remains of at least 18 people have been studied (al-Duweesh 2010a, 198).

Al-Radha area

SRE Mound

There is good skeleton preservation for at least three people. There is a complete skull and a few fragments of another skull. In addition, there are many complete bones and bone fragments from all parts of the skeleton. There is a complete skull belonging to someone young with no specific sex (there is little erosion of the teeth), while the other skeletons were of two males. The younger one was 25-30 years old estimated by the pubic bone fusion, and the older was 35-40 years old estimated by the pubic bone fusion and teeth erosion. Sex has been estimated by pubic and skull bones (al-Duweesh 2008b, 1-2).

SRG6 Mound

SRG6 Mound contains eroded fragments of skull bone, with the main reason for the erosion being the penetration of plant roots. The bones belong to a teenager or young adult (al-Duwiash 2008, 1-2).

Kadhima area

The first skeletons analysed were discovered in this area; for example the *KG1* grave that was excavated by Kuwaiti Archaeological team in 2004 (al-Duweesh *et al*. 2004, 4).

Mughairah area

Here, I will focus on the burial mounds that have skeletons.

SMQ30 Mound: In this area sharply eroded remains of at least two adults, and a lot of fragments of teeth was found. It is possible that one of the remains was female.

SMQ33Mound: This has bones that have been eroded. They were from one person, including fragments of the femur humerus and hip bones, and some fragments of the cranium of a broken skull; it is likely to be an adult female. The sex was estimated by measurements of the clavicle (al-Duweesh 2010a, 200).

SMQ35 Mound: This has remains of at least four people. This mound has two skeletons which are preserved quite well. These skeletons are possibly female. The age is estimated by the skull fusion and dental erosion; while the sex is estimated in the form of the cranium of the skull, and diameter of the femur bone. Also there are bones from a male and a teenage boy (Sołtysiak 2007, 2-3).

Sołtysiak (2007) noted that the bones and teeth had eroded severely, and there were only four tombs that contained almost complete skeletons; the water in these areas was the main reason for the erosion. All of the bodies in the Sabbiyah area were buried almost directly above rocky ground and covered with stones and a thin layer of sand. For this reason, the bones disintegrated gradually when the water flowed on the rocky ground. In addition to this, the bones retain water more than sand, and the roots of desert plants whilst searching for water, can often penetrate the bones to absorb

water. The rapid changes of the humidity can also lead to cracking, and damage of the bone.

It is clear that none of the burial mounds had infant or child skeletons. There are many possibilities for that absence. For example, their weak bones were completely eroded by the water which may make the small bones completely dissolve, or on the other hand, they could be buried in another place such as the sea. Most of the female graves are in the Mughairah area and the male graves are in other areas, which maybe indicate that there were social customs separating the female graves from the male graves (al-Duweesh 2010a, 203).

As for dental caries, which is very important to define the economy and the food of those people, the question here is, were they predominantly agriculturalists or fishermen? In the prehistoric periods there are differences in the frequency of dental caries in the communities of the Arabian Peninsula. There were areas that had a low dental caries rate. These indicate the Mesolithic Ras al-Hamra site, which is located in the Sultanate of Oman (Macchiarelli 1989, 575-94), the Bronze Age Umm al-Nar site, which is situated in the United Arab Emirates (Jgaard 1981, 31-36.), or the Iron Age sites in Bahrain (Jarman 1977, 19-40). In addition, there were areas with a high rate, for instance, the Bronze Age Janosan site in Bahrain (Jarman 1977, 19-40). There is a causal relationship between people’s work and dental caries. It is believed that the people who adopted palm cultivation had more dental caries than herders and fishermen. (al-Khalifa and Rice 1986, 64-72). In the Kuwait sample, which dates to Bronze Age, there was little evidence for dental caries and that may indicate a lifestyle of herding and fishing rather than agricultural subsitance.

Through our review of burial mounds in Kuwait, we can classify the grave into the following types:

Type I: a hill with a circular shaped pit such as *SNG6-SMQ11*. Usually there are no fills between the walls. The burial chamber often has an oval plan that decreases in width as it ascends the mound. There are no entrances in the circular wall (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 66).

Type II: a conic shape mound such as *SRE* with an oval or circular burial chamber. It decreases in width as it approaches the top of the mound. The grave is surrounded by a stone wall which has a circular shape and the distance between the burial chamber and the stone wall is filled with stones of irregular shape. There are no entrances in the walls (al-Nu'aimi and al-Fadli 2004).

Type III: a mound with an oval base. This type of burial is similar to the previous type in general terms of construction, but the difference here is this type has an oval base and the previous type has a circular base. Maybe the people who built this type of grave were affected by the previous style (al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2006, 19).

Type IV: rectangular constructions having different sizes. Some of them are similar to cists today. The other type of them takes a zigzag shape with different lengths and sometimes has apertures, such as *SBH1* and *SMQ2*. These paving stones look similar to some of the burial mounds in the United Arab Emirates which are dated to 2000BC. Perhaps the goal of these constructions was to be a significant sign for specific groups or for religious facilities like sacrificial tables or gatherings, because each area of burial mounds contains these rectangular constructions (al-Duweesh, al-Mutairi and Salem 2004, 34).

Type V: a mound with a cylindrical shape. This type has unique features because it has three concentric circular stone walls. The first one is in the circular wall, the second in the middle, between the circular wall and the burial chamber, and the third one it is the burial chamber wall. A key example of this type is *SHB2*. It looks similar to burial mounds in Souq which is located in Oman and eastern United Arab Emirates.

Type VI: a fixed construction. It is rare in Kuwait, such as *SB19* (al-Duweesh, al-Mutairi and Salem 2004, 66).

Similar burial mounds in the other regions

In terms of the external shape and the burial chamber designs which take circular and oval shapes, Hafit burial mounds, which are located in the United Arab Emirates, are similar to the Sabbiyah mounds. Moreover, there were no settlements in the Hafit area and Sabbiyah area belonging to these graves. This may suggest that the people who built these burial mounds were nomadic. Furthermore, Hafīt and Sabbiyah burial mounds were reused in the second and first millennia BC, and in the Hellenistic period (al-Duweesh 2010a, 221; see also Chapter 6). These burial mounds are surrounded by low walls and their diameter is between 2-3m. Each one has a tail up to 75cm. These burial mounds were dated to the Bronze Age (Abdul-Na‘im 1995, 212). Yabrīn burial mounds in eastern Saudi Arabia are also similar to the burial mounds which have been found in al-Nahdain in the Sabbiyah region, for example *SNG1* (al-Duweesh 2010a, 223).

Moreover, Rajum Sa'asa'a which is located in Taima in northern Saudi Arabia (al-Taima'ie 2006, 82) is similar to *SNG2* in Sabbiyah, in that the burial chamber is located in the middle of the tomb, surrounded by three walls (al-Duweesh 2010a, 224).

Furthermore, there are circular and rectangular stone buildings located in the middle of Saudi Arabia near Riyadh (al-Shay‘a 2009, 33) similar to stone buildings in Sabbiyah, for example SBH1. These stone buildings have not been excavated yet but in Kuwait it has been revealed that the circular stone buildings were tombs and the rectangular stone buildings were not tombs, but perhaps were constructed for funeral preparations or for a religious reason (al-Duweesh 2010a, 24). Also, there are tombs in Wadi al-Sail in Bahrain Island similar to SBH35 in Sabbiyah. These tombs are dated to 2200 - 2050BC (Hojlund 2008, 8-9). Perhaps these similarities highlight connections between Kuwait and the wider world that were not just based on trade and exchange (see Chapter 5).

In Qatar, there are burial mounds called Umm al-Maa'a, located on the northern side of Qatar near the sea. Most of these burial mounds take a rectangular shape. The Danish archaeological expedition found several pieces of bronze and fragment of marble plate dating to the pre-Islamic period. This indicates that these burial mounds may have been reused in the pre-Islamic period (al-Khulaifī 2003, 48-49; see Chapter 7). Umm al-Maa'a burial mounds are similar to Sabbiyah burial mounds, for example *SBHG16* mound (al-Duweesh 2010a, 227).

Burial mounds from the Euphrates Valley:

The historical documents and the archaeological evidence indicate the relationships between the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle Euphrates (Potts 2003a, 219-26) For example, many Mesopotamian ceramics have been found in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula (e.g. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar) (Hojlund and Andersen 1994, 109). Moreover, copper and tin were imported from Central Asia, Iran and Magan through Dilmun to Mari in Syria. The historical documents stated that there were commercial and diplomatic relations between Dilmun and Mari during 2100 - 1800BC (Kepinski 2007, 128; see discussions in Chapter 5). Many graves that are located along the Euphrates valley are similar to the graves in the Arabian Gulf but some findings, such as pottery, are quite different. Furthermore, the rectangular burial chambers, which are found below the ground in Mesopotamia, were built above the ground in the Arabian Peninsula. Religious rituals can not be the result of just exchange, but exchange can assist communication between the communities.

A large number of these burial mounds were empty. There is little evidence that these graves have been robbed because there is no damage to the grave walls. Perhaps people built these tombs as cenotaphs to commemorate their relatives who were lost abroad and they could not bring them home (Piesinger 1983, 122). Another opinion suggests that the burial mounds were prepared for burial, but were left empty as events occurred that stopped them being filled – such as people having to move away in a hurry (Hashim 1996, 83-98). Perhaps these graves were for warriors that were killed in different battles, as there were many wars that took place in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula in the Bronze Age and several other periods (Cornwall 1953, 39-45). For instance, in al-Mazru’ah located in Qatar, two burial mounds have two

skeletons; the first one has a sword and arrow heads, while the second has an arrow head still embedded in his arm (Rice 2002, 341).

Al-Thani (1997) reported that she compared the graves in northwest Bahrain with those in al-Hejer located in the northeast, and she stated that in the northwest the land is rocky while in the northeast is flat and well suited for agriculture. Here, the geological factors might have dictated how the Bronze Age people built their tombs. In Sabbiyah there are no settlement links with burial mounds. Rice (2002) reported that the sea level of the Arabian Gulf has risen since 4000BC. Thus most of the settlements, which are located on the western coast, have become submerged. For instance, in the Emirate of al-‘Ain, which is located in the United Arab Emirates, sewerage works found a burial mound about 2m under the mud. This tomb dated back to 1000BC. Perhaps there are lots of settlements under the sea and mud which are near to the Gulf coast (Potts 2003a, 162). I believe that perhaps these opinions are right as most of Sabbiyah still remains uninvestigated. So we can not say with certainty that there are no settlements until more excavations are completed. In this point, Shehab (2007b) has recently discovered an oval shaped burial mound at al-Khidr on Failaka Island. In this grave was a skeleton in a foetal position dating to 1600-1400BC. Furthermore, Potts (2003a, 405) stated that although many archaeological excavations have been carried out in Kuwait, it still needs further investigation. Unfortunately, Sabbiyah is now under the control of a large governmental project, which potentially could destroy the archaeological sites.

4.9 Conclusion

The burial mounds are not a continuous tradition, as there are some gaps within the various periods. This may just be a result of the archaeological record to date. Some of graves were reused at later dates during the Bronze Age and Hellenistic period (see Chapter 6). This reuse of earlier burial traditions might suggest similar cosmologies at play, or that some people were referencing past people or creating connections to the environment**.** Bradley (1993) highlights that even though the shape of a structure can remain the same for many generations, its usage and the way people regard it can alter dramatically. For instance, at al-Khidr**,** located northwest of Failaka Island (Bartra *et al.* 2007, 69; Bartra *et al.* 2008, 122), a lighthouse was constructed in the 19th century AD to assist with shipping. Over time, however, it became seen as a place of religious pilgrimage, with people worshiping there as a shrine (Salem 2006, 57-8). Although the essential form of the structure did not change – its significance did.

It is difficult to achieve precise dating of the burial mounds in Kuwait due to the lack of available datable material, but it is thought that most of the burial mounds belong to the Bronze Age because most of the objects discovered in the mounds are typologically similar to others dated to the Bronze Age. It is clear from comparisons with other burial mounds, whether in the Arabian Gulf or in the Euphrates valley, that these burial mounds were probably created by people who had a nomadic lifestyle, because no significant settlements for these burial mounds have been found so far (although further excavations may alter this interpretation), and this maybe indicates that migratory people lived in these areas. Kepinski (2007) stated that these burial mounds were for migratory tribes, who, in the late second millennium BC settled and established states, whether in the north or south of Mesopotamia.

The place that we currently name Kuwait was not socially isolated and insular in prehistoric and proto-historic times. It was influenced by the surrounding regions. Therefore, most of the Kuwaiti archaeological sites demonstrate similar features to other sites, whether they are in the north or south of the Arabian Gulf.

4.10 **Summary**

I have demonstrated that the burial mounds phenomenon is most common in the western parts of the Arabian Gulf. This occurrence might be the result of several factors, such as the idea of creating a burial mound moving via trade and exchange (information exchange), or by people moving (e.g. nomads) and taking the concept of a mound with them. I have examined some of the finds from the burial mounds that may indicate trade connections between Kuwait and other areas. I discussed burial mounds to explain if the builders were nomadic people or not**.** Moreover, I have discussed the skeletal analyses which possibly demonstrate that these skeletons belonged to nomadic people who developed exchange relations with other areas in the Arabian Gulf. Furthermore, I compared Kuwaiti burial mounds with other burial mounds in the Arabian Gulf to see if there are similarities or differences between them. Most of the burial mounds in Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf have lots of material remains, such as bronze ornaments, beads and shells. Perhaps these similarities highlight connections between Kuwait and the wider world that were not just based on trade and exchange. These points will be further explored in the following Chapters.

Chapter 5

5.1 The Dilmun Civilisation

This chapter will introduce Dilmun, an important civilisation that flourished in the Arabian Gulf, between 2400 and 300BC. I will re-consider the original location of the Dilmun civilisation. I will tease out the impact of Dilmun trade relations and their extent. Did Failaka Island and Bahrain have economic and religious importance during the second millennium BC? Did the people in both Failaka Island and Bahrain have the same sense of identity? Was Dilmun a unified phenomenon? What are the consequences of seeing it more as a network of interactive areas? In answering and addressing these concerns, I will discuss other select Kuwaiti Dilmun sites, and focus on one in detail. This chapter will demonstrate that Kuwait was not isolated from adjacent regions but was connected by economic and cosmological relationships. For example, the largest number of Dilmun seals, which is the most significant feature of Dilmun culture, being spread over several regions such as the Eastern Arabian Peninsula, the Indus Valley and Syria, have been found in Failaka Island. Here, I review these sites with the Dilmun in Failaka Island, and Bahrain and Mesopotamia during the Bronze Age. Traditionally there is no evidence for the Dilmun in mainland Kuwait. Here I will address such absences by introducing new discoveries, thereby progressing current debate and building upon discussions in Chapter 4 on the burial mounds.

5.1.1 The name of Dilmun

Dilmun, or Talmun, is associated with numerous ancient Mesopotamian myths, such as the myth of Enki and Ninhursag. In the myths it is often described as the land where the sun rises and a garden of paradise that is a shiny, flawless, fresh and

dazzling area. In this land there is no disease, atrocity or animosity. The popular idea suggests that the Dilmun garden is never without water because it was provided by Enki, who was the Sumerian god of water. It is believed that the Dilmun garden was created to be a comfortable place for the gods where human beings are not allowed (al-Bader 1978, 93 -105). The first historical appearance of the word Dilmun was in the Sumerian texts. It stated that Dilmun was a commercial centre for Sumerian trade and industry, being a link between Sumer, and the Indus Valley (Crawford 1998, 5; al-Bader 1978, 109; Potts 2003a, 299). The oldest text, which was discovered at Warkaa city, is the first known recording of the name Dilmun, and it is dated to *c*.3200BC (Rice 2002, 225). Also there are Dilmun related figures present on several goods such as metal productions and fabrics. Dilmun was predominantly associated with copper (Rice 2002, 225). There is also another document from the time period, which demonstrates financial goods and has Dilmun symbolic images (Fekery 1963, 76). Through all these documents we can say that Dilmun activities occurred before the foundation of Cuneiform writing. This writing system was first connected with the term copper, and was obtained in the Magan Mountains (Oman) of the south Arabian Gulf, around 3200 - 2500BC. By 2400BC, the name Dilmun became related with Magan in cuneiform writing (Hajjāwī 2001, 42). The texts of the city of Lagash in Mesopotamia, which dates to 2500BC, consider the foundation of this city and the king through writing; here there are descriptions of Dilmun ships which were used to import wood all over Mesopotamia (al-Hashimi 1981. 36-56).

There is a cuneiform document dated to 2365BC, which indicates that a shipment of Dilmun copper arrived for Lagash merchants. Furthermore, there is an official text of the Akkadian king Sargon I (2334 - 2279BC), which suggests that ships came from Melukha (Indus valley), Dilmun and Magan (Hajjāwī 2001, 42).

From these documents we can ascertain that the name Dilmun existed during the fourth and third millennium BC, and this is supported by Syrian documents which discuss the trade and safest known commercial/convoy routes, between Mari and Ibela kingdom around 2500BC (Potts 1986, 393). These commercial documents indicate the important and vital roles that the Dilmun civilisation played (Baqer 1971, 46).

As a result of their excavations in Qala‘at al-Bahrain, the Danish archaeological mission to Bahrain has divided the Dilmun society into five periods:

a) City I (2400 - 2000BC),

b) City II (2000 - 1600BC),

c) City III (1600 - 650BC),

d) City IV (650 - 300BC),

e) City V (300BC to the 1st century AD) (see Rice 2002, 232).

Dilmun settlements mostly consist of dwellings and religious sites. Bahrain has the oldest known site in the Arabian Gulf, called City I (Qala‘at al-Bahrain site). There are several Dilmun sites in Bahrain such as Barbar, Umm al-Sajjur, Diraz, A'ali al-Hajjar, Saar and al-Arīn (Killick and Moon 2005, 2; see Figure 5.1).

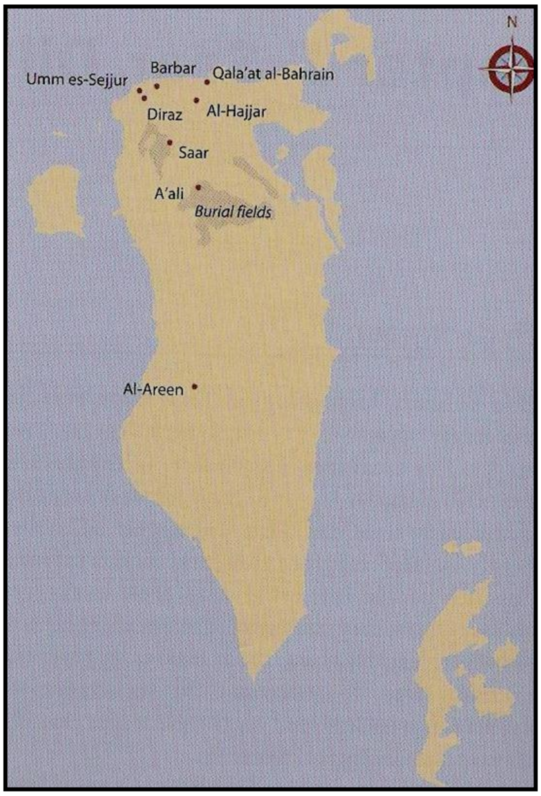


Figure 5.1. Map showing Dilmun Sites in Bahrain (Killick and Moon 2005, 2).

I have selected the site of Saar, dating to the beginning of the second millennium BC, as an example to discuss because it has similar structures to the Governor's Palace in F6 site on Failaka Island (Rice 2002, 310). Saar is located in the southern part of Bahrain. This site was discovered by Jordanian and Bahraini archaeological teams between 1983 and 1985 (Ibrahaim 1982, 15). The site was next excavated by a British archaeological team between 1990 and 1999 (al-Thani 1997, 126). The excavations have revealed a settlement consisting of a temple located on a high hill, and many houses south and southeast of the temple. In the main entrance of the temple on the outside there are five cylindrical columns. The temple takes an irregular rectangular form (see Figure 5.2). The temple area is about 16.5 x 9.25m and is built from local stone. Inside, it has three piers set in a row; one of them is circular and the other two are square in section. There is a bucranium altar (the skull of a bull with horns still attached) to the side of these columns, which is similar to another

located on the southeastern wall of the temple (Killick and Moon 2005, 140-2). The excavations in this temple have revealed two rooms in the western part and a podium and water basin in the north and northwest area. The dwelling area is located at the bottom of the hill. It was built in blocks with each block having three houses. Most of the houses have similar constructions. The houses have a rectangular form and each one has two rooms and a courtyard containing several facilities, such as an oven and water basin. It was found that the roof of the houses contained palm frond remains (Killick and Moon 2005, 161).



Figure 5.2. Photograph showing Saar Temple in Bahrain (al-Thani 1997, 298).

The most important aspect of the Dilmun civilisation for archaeologists traditionally has been the stamp seals, because they emphasize the scope of Dilmun, and distinguish Dilmun from other societies. They are found widely in many regions such as the Arabian Gulf, Indus Valley, Mesopotamia, northern Syria and Anatolia (Hajjāwī 2001, 51). Dilmun pottery in comparison is only found in the Arabian Gulf region. Furthermore, there is no Dilmun architecture found in other areas, except on Failaka Island .

The seals of Dilmun are mostly made of steatite (see Figure 5.3). They are generally circular in shape and they have decorations on both sides (Kjaerum 1983, 14). There are also some stamp seals with rectangular forms and including some made of pottery and ivory.



Figure 5.3. Dilmun seals from al-Khidr in Failaka Island (Benediková 2010, 84).

The diameter of the majority is about 2-3cm (Crawford 2001, 17). The reverse generally has circular lines and the obverse has four main types of decoration: convex or straight, angular, grooved and concave (Kjaerum 1983, 14). Bibby (1984) reported that the beginning of seal production dates to City II in Qala‘at al-Bahrain (2000BC), while City I, which was established in 2400BC, did not have any. The imprint of the Dilmun seal that is available at Yale University is printed on a fragment of clay and dates to 1923BC, the tenth year of the reign of Gungunum, the King of Larsa. It is very important as it can be considered the first known text documenting the history of the Dilmun seals (Amiet 1975, 265). On Failaka Island, circular Dilmun seals have been discovered in the lower layers, while Kassite (1530 - 1170 BC) and Mitanni (1500-1300BC) cylindrical seals have been discovered in the upper layers (Hajjāwī 2001, 51). Although it provides less material than the seals, the other important indicator of Dilmun society is its pottery, as this uniquely and easily identifiable.



Figure 5.4. Photograph showing F3 site (Hojlund 2009, 31).

5.1.2 Dilmun sites in Kuwait

(a) *F3 site*

Known locally as Tell Sa'ad, this site is recognised as the grave of a man called Sa'ad (Salem 2006, 59). It is a low hill situated on the west side of Failaka Island near the coast (see Figure 5.4). Found in this site is a village composed of small dwellings structures randomly built around an open square area. Its width is about 12m and it is surrounded by a fence. The house area covers 15 x 5m divided into small rooms overlooking a courtyard. These houses have ovens which were built inside the walls and tables were built on the floors. Also there are two water tanks and ovens in the east part of these houses (Hojlund 1987, 131-4). The open square space around which the houses cluster is likely to be a temple of the Inzak god, because found here was a piece of steatite vessel inscribed with "Temple of Inzak" (Bibby 1986, 331-2). This site dates to 2000 - 1800BC. Although the technical architecture at the site of F3 is later than the F6 site, the small finds in this hill date to the end of the third millennium BC and the beginning of the second millennium BC (Hajjāwī 2001, 49).

Kjaerum (1986) supported Carter's (1972) dating of this site. He attributed it to the Issin-Larsa period (2000 - 1760BC). He reported that this site was built later than the Governor's Palace in the site of F6 (2000 - 1900BC) and that the village houses were expanded in 1300BC during the Kassite period (1530 - 1170BC) (Calvet 1986, 14). Moreover, Kjarerum (1986) indicated that this site was settled during two phases. The first phase is on the north side of the hill and the second phase was when people abandoned the houses in the north and built similar houses on the southern side of the hill opposite the beach. The people in this site effectively moved from one side to the other. This could be due to lack of water, forcing them to look for another place with an abundant supply. On the eastern side of this site there are several houses which are believed to be craftsmen's houses or domestic houses, as this is where oven remains and burnt pottery were found (Hajjāwī 2001, 49).

(b) *F6 site*

This site is a hill located about 0.02km from the northern side of F3 (Tell Sa'ad) (see Figure 5.5). It dates to the Bronze Age. Red-ridged wares, which are known as Barbar pottery in Qala'at al-Bahrian and date to the early second millennium BC, have been found in this site. This is indicative of the first phase of settlement on Failaka Island. Among the most important architectural features on this hill is a large building, which dated to approximately 2000BC. The Danish archaeological team named the Governor's Palace (Hajjāwī 2001, 46). The Palace was likely to have been built in three phases: the first phase between 2000 - 1700BC, the second phase between 1600 - 1400BC, and the third phase between 612 - 539BC (Calvet 1986, 14).



Figure 5.5. Photograph showing northeastern part of F6 site (Hojlund 2009, 31).

It should be pointed out here that there is an archaeological gap from 1300BC to700BC. The palace may have been abandoned at that time. Found in two of the palace rooms, were a large number of medium-sized jars dating to 1450 - 1310BC, standing *in situ* on the floor. This might indicate that the building was suddenly abandoned (Hojlund 1987, 139-44). The Palace area is about 1820m²; it was built of stones and dried mud. The building is divided into two parts. The first is the entrance, which covers half of the Palace area. It includes a number of rooms that are likely to have been used as reception rooms or for administration purposes, as is seen in the Mycenean palace of Pylos (*c*. 1300BC) (Blegen and Rawson 1966; Chadwick 1976), or even in contemporary palaces today. The second part is the living area, which includes several rooms surrounding an open courtyard with features of four stone bases. Perhaps they were the bases of columns to support the courtyard ceiling, which was mostly made of fronds palm (Hajjāwī 2001, 47). Such architectural devices are

still currently used on Failaka Island in the village of al-Zur, which was recently surveyed by ethnoarchaeologists (Benediková *et al*. 2008, 55; see Figure 5.6).

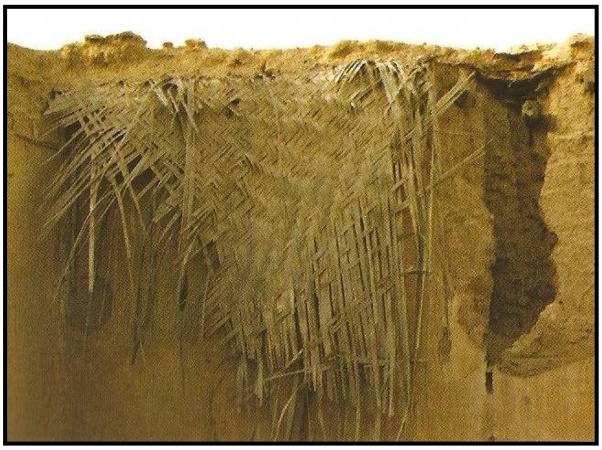


Figure 5.6 Photograph showing a house ceiling made from fronds palm (Benediková *et al*. 2008, 55).

Most of the rooms were used for living in except a few on the eastern side, which were used as warehouses, where complete medium jars stacked on each other were found. Approximately 0.02km away from this palace, the French archaeological team found remains of a Tower Temple built on a solid base with construction materials characterised by high-quality work. The French archaeological team believed that the Governor's Palace was a building to manage the affairs of the Tower Temple. The Tower Temple is the only building that was carefully constructed using a large number of dressed stones while most of the island's buildings, which date to the Bronze Age, were built on rubble bases (Calvet 1986, 114). It was probably built to increase supervision from the island's centre to other buildings, such as the Governor's Palace (Calvet 1986, 116). The French archaeologists believe that this temple, located next to a public building, was perhaps a temple of Inzak, who was the greater god of Dilmun, or Enki, the freshwater god, as there are many water tanks on this site (Calvet 1986, 15-16). Archaeological excavations have revealed in some Arabian Gulf countries, such as Oman and the United Arab Emirates, the existence of

this architectural style (Rice 2002, 309-10). That similar styles exist in these differing regions at similar times does strongly suggest a level of interaction between the areas. For instance, in Oman many of these circular buildings or tower buildings have been identified on many sites such as Baat (5m high and 20m diameter). Such high walls may indicate the defensible purpose of this tower building, to watch the surrounding areas near the building. Many tower buildings have been found along the routes between the copper mines in Magan (Oman) and coastal ports, such as Umm al-Nar Island. Furthermore, in the United Arab Emirates there are several tower buildings, such as Tell Abraq and Hili. Hili, which is the oldest, dates from the beginning of the third millennium BC to the beginning of the second millennium BC. The settlement at Hili includes many such buildings (Potts 2003a, 101-2).

The tower building has important archaeological remains, such as plants, grain, animal skeletons and some worked copper. These remains demonstrate the agricultural, economic and industrial materials that were used at that time. In addition, the excavations have revealed that all of these tower buildings were built of mud bricks and local stones and they usually have a well in the middle (al-Thani 1997, 136). Such a high tower would have been visible from far away, creating a marker in the landscape and possibly a seafaring navigational point - making significant statements. For example, it may have been about projecting ideas of prestige, incorporation, exclusion, status and power. For the makers and users of the tower, it may have helped affirm their senses of identity and worldviews (see discussions in Bradley 1998; Bailey 2000).

(c) *G3 site*

G3 site is a small mound located approximately 0.3km north of the F6 site. Its length is about 1.80m. It was discovered and excavated by the French-Kuwaiti archaeological team in 1983. Barbar pottery and Mosopotamian objects have been found on this site which dates to City II in Qala‘at al-Bahrain. This site dates to 2000BC, which is the same period as the other Bronze Age sites in Failaka Island (Calvet 1983, 51-7). Recently, the Kuwaiti archaeological team dug some test pits approximately 26m away from the G3 site. The team found some structures (Mastaba-Terrace) and Barbar pottery, which is similar to the G3 and F6 sites. It seems that this site relates to the G3 site, as evidenced by similar pottery and structural remains (al-Mutairi 2011a, 1-8).

(d) *Al-Awazim site*

Al-awazim site is located on the northern coast of Failaka Island about 0.07km from the coast. It called al-Awazim after the tribe who used to live in this part of Failaka Island. The site is a hill about 1.57m high aligned east-west and about 20m long. In the eastern part there is a group of stones vertically built like a basin. To the west of these stones there are some prehistoric structures. There are pottery fragments spread out on the surface of the hill which date back to the Bronze Age, and to the south there are some scattered stones, probably dwellings units, dating to the late Islamic period (Antiquity Department 2000, 45). Recently in April 2011 the Georgian and Kuwaiti archaeological teams have excavated this site. The excavations have revealed some fragments of Dilmun pottery, Islamic pottery, shells and vertically placed stones.

Al-Mutairi (2011a, 1-4) argues that the two hut-like structures discovered were for fishermen. There is little evidence, however, that these rooms were specifically just for fishermen, as the accumulations of shell fish found might equally have been for the manufacture of personal ornaments.

(e) *Al-Khidr site*

Al-Khidr site is located northwest of Failaka Island (Bartra *et al.* 2007, 69; Bartra *et al.* 2008, 122). It is a strategic and important location because it is positioned within a natural bay (see Figure 5.7), which is opposite the southern Mesopotamia cities (Antiquity Department 2000, 37). Al-Khidr was a port in the past. In more recent times it is known as Dauhat sa'idah port. Found on the surface were fragments of red pottery, which date to the Bronze Age and some remains date to the first century BC and first century AD (Benediková 2010, 34). This will be discussed in detail below.



Figure 5.7. Photograph showing al-Khidr site in the natural bay (Benediková 2010, 15).

A brief history of al-Khidr site

The al-Khidr site consists of a building constructed at the end of the 19th century AD on a tell. It was built by a rich Saudi woman who was married to a man from Failaka Island. The purpose of this construction was to be a lighthouse located on high-ground to guide ships to port that were passing near this part of the island where there are coral reefs and dangerous rocks. She also ordered a well to be dug near this building. After her death another woman took over the building and she told the story that there is a carved rock with a picture of a pot and stick belonging to al-Khidr (St. George), who rested and died here. Since that time, (see Figure 5.8) this place became a shrine, which some people make a pilgrimage to, often sacrificing sheep and asking for the help (Salem 2006, 57-8).

Locally, the al-Khidr shrine was known to protect fishermen and cure disease and problems, such as infertility (Carter 1972, 19; Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 419; al-Failakāwī 2000, 70). In the 1930s, the island's governor ordered the destruction of this building because of the ‘unrealistic actions’ of some people (al-Failakāwī 2000, 71). This destruction left only a pile of stones. Shortly after, some people started collecting these stones and practising their beliefs again. Glob (2003), a Danish archaeologist, visited this site in 1958 and described people sacrificing sheep with women putting their hands in the sheep’s blood and staining the shrine walls to cure disease. Also he stated that there was Bronze Age pottery on site. Thus, in 1976 the Kuwait government ordered its permanent destruction, as it symbolically went against the dominant beliefs of the nation state (Salem 2006, 58).

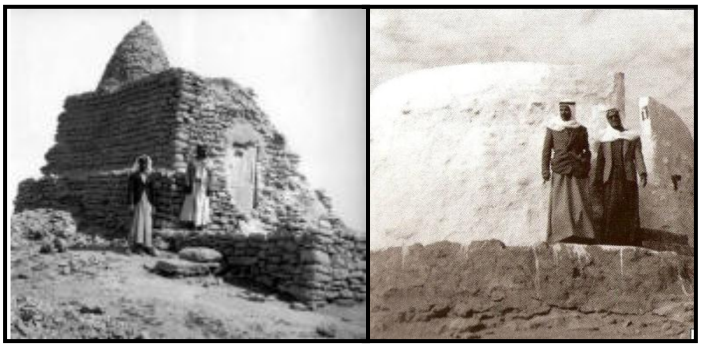


Figure.5.8. Photograph showing al-Khidr shrine in 1930s and 1960s (Benediková 2010, 15).

Bibby (1984) reported that this tell is possibly a temple of Artemise, who was one of the Greek gods. This site contains three separate hills: Kh1, Kh2 and Kh3 (see Figure 5.9). Just one of three hills was excavated because the other tells are located within a modern Islamic cemetery and therefore they could not be investigated (Benediková *et al.* 2008, 23).

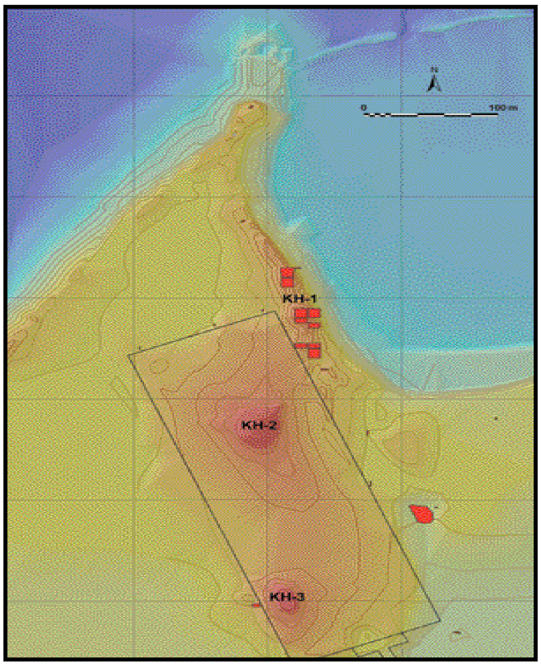


Figure 5.9. Al-Khidr sites 3D image (Bartra *et al*. 2008, 129).

Kh-1(al-Khidr)

The width of this tell is about 30-40m and its length is about 150m. On the surface of this site, were found fragments of Dilmun red-ridged ware, which date to the middle of the Bronze Age (Bartra *et al.* 2008, 123). Also, there are building structures. The excavations began in 2004 (see Figure 5.10). They have revealed a rectangular building, many Bronze Age pottery fragments, and some archaeological remains, which date to different periods and will be discussed in detail below. From the eastern side of this site, it is clear that the winds and tides played a role in erosion. The site was probably bigger in the past (Benediková *et al.* 2008, 23). It is likely, from different excavation levels, that this site was a multi-function building; for example, perhaps it was a house with an area behind for practising daily activities. It could also have been a place for manufacturing storage jars (Benediková 2010, 34-6). The stone structures in this site are similar to F3 site and Saar site in Bahrain in that local stones were used. This might suggest that these sites were built in the same way and period at the beginning of the second millennium BC.

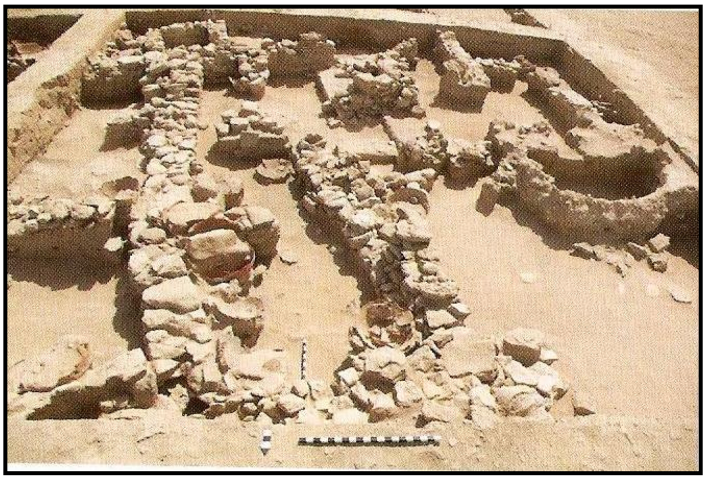


Figure 5.10. Photograph showing al-Khidr site plan (Benediková 2010, 39).

Finds

(a) *Metal objects*

The biggest group of finds that have been found in this site are metal objects. They date to the Dilmun period and most of them are copper. Bronze objects are found, but generally fewer in number compared to copper. Copper-rods were used for many things such as needles, chisels, styluses, punches and awls. Some of these finds were fitted with a bone handle such as, mammal and bird bones. Fish hooks made of copper have also been found at this site (Bartra *et al.* 2008, 124; see Figure 5.11). This indicates the significance and importance of fishing for the people who lived in this site. In addition, bronze tools have been found in this site, such as beads, ring, rivets, arrowhead and tweezers (Benediková 2010, 54; Benediková *et al.* 2008, 29).



Figure 5.11. Photograph showing metal tools fitted with bone handle and some copper fish hooks (Benediková 2010, 63; Benediková *et al*. 2008, 29)

(b) *Soft stone (steatite)*

This is the second biggest group found in this site. Soft stone (also known as soapstone) was used for ornaments and other purposes, consisting of seals, vessels and vessel fragments. Soft stone is not a local material of Kuwait - the origin of these raw materials is the al-Hajjar Mountains, which are located in the northeast of the Sultanate of Oman and eastern United Arab Emirates (see Figure 5.12).

In 2005, four test samples were taken to a laboratory at Masary University in Brno to discover how people produced vessels in this site in the past. The results are clear that the vessels were hacked from a solid soft stone (Benediková 2010, 55). Soft stone seems common in southeastern Arabian sites during the Bronze Age such as Wadi - Souq site in Oman. This indicates that there were connections (at some level) between al-Khidr, Oman and the eastern United Arab Emirates. This might have been something simple, such as information exchange on best building practice, to something more complex, such as expression of a belief system.

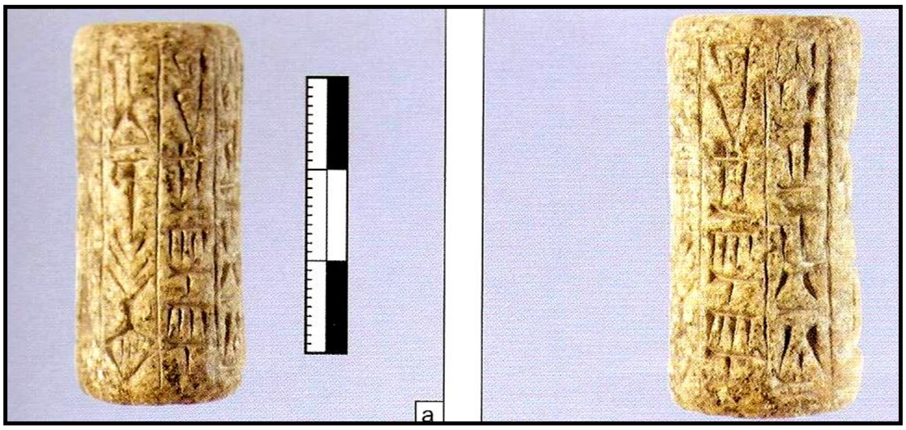


Figure 5.12. Photograph showing Dilmun seal made of soft stone (Benediková 2010, 81).

(c) *Seal*s

On al-Khidr site alone 71 Dilmun seals were found (see Figure 5.13). They are similar to the other Dilmun seals in Gulf regions (see Crawford 2001, 17; al-Thani 1997, 154-5; Benediková *et al.* 2008, 33). Most of them are made of soft stone, and there are some seals made of other materials, for example there is a seal made of mother of pearl (Benediková 2010, 55; Benediková *et al.* 2008, 33).



Figure 5.13. Photograph showing Dilmun seals from al-Khidr site (Benediková *et al*. 2008, 33).

(d) *Soft stone vessels and vessel fragments*

A large quantity of them was found in al-Khidr site. Most of them take a spherical and semi-spherical form (Bartra *et al.* 2008, 125; see Figure 5.14). It is rare to find a vessel with handles. They are decorated with a group of dotted circles and incised lines. There are also vessels that have another form, such as plates, low prismatic vessel, cylindrical vessels, low cylindrical vessels and strainers. Some vessels were found with bitumen and perhaps this was used for repairing them. Recent experiments by Belanová-Štolcová (2010) at al-Khidr have demonstrated that bitumen works as an effective repair glue (see Figure 5.15). Also found were soft stone ornaments made of re-used sherds of soft stone vessels (Benediková 2010, 55). The materials and decorations in this site are similar to F6 site. Again suggesting that they existed in the same period.



Figure 5.14. Photograph showing spherical bowl with incised decorations (Benedikov *et al.* 2008, 30).

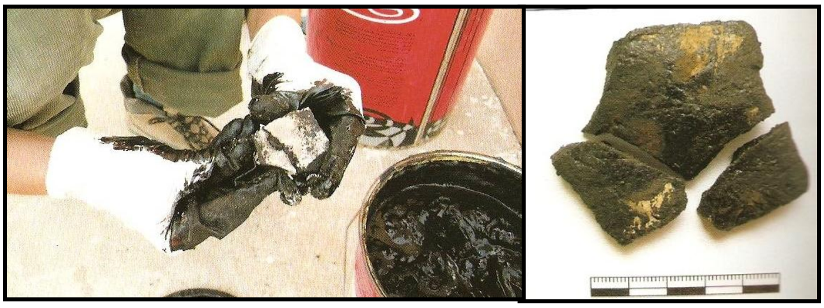


Figure 5.15. Photograph showing bitumen as a repairing agent (Benediková 2010, 318).

(e) *Flint and non-flint objects*

On the site was discovered a variety of quartz, and one piece of obsidian (see Figure 5.16). They may have been obtained from the mainland, for example from Sulaibikhat. Flint tools, scrapers, cutting tools and perforators are rare in the site. Al-Khidr has some blades and flakes. It should be mentioned that their current size is diminished due to subsequent water erosion over time. Non-flint objects have been found, such as tools for hammering (pounders, hammer stones and crushers), and tools like mortars and grinders (Benediková 2010, 56; Benediková *et al.* 2008, 33).



Figure 5.16. Photograph Showing flint and Non-flint objects from al-Khidr (Benediková *et al*. 2008, 34-5).

(f) *Ornaments*

A small number of ornaments have been discovered in the site, such as beads, stone beads (see Figure 5.17), and ornaments made of shell, mother of pearl and bone (Benediková 2010, 57).



Figure 5.17. Photograph showing small bead from al-Khidr (Benediková *et al*. 2008, 34).

(g) *Bitumen*

Bitumen has been found throughout the site. It is a naturally occurring black substance (a viscous form of crude petroleum – sometimes referred to as Asphalt) that is mixed with organic material and mineral matters, such as sand, clay, palm and reed

leaves, and chopped straw (see Figure 5.18). The bitumen was used for several things, for example with gypsum in the construction process of bonding walls, and waterproofing the inside and outside of baskets and pottery, or for repair (Benediková 2010, 57-8; Benediková *et al.* 2008, 36-7; Bartra *et al.* 2008, 125).

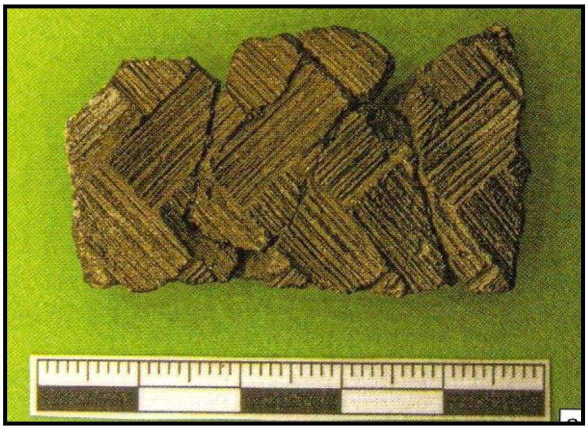


Figure 5.18. Photograph showing bitumen on palm and reed leaves (Benediková 2010, 246).

(h) *Islamic objects*

The Islamic finds in al-Khidr date to the late and the middle Islamic periods (Benediková 2010, 58; see discussions in Chapter 8).

(i) *Pottery*

Al-Khidr pottery is colourful and made by hand and wheel. The type most observed are the large red-ridged jars (see Figure 5.19), which are found in several positions within the site (Bartra *et al.* 2008, 124). The large jars were probably used for storage. Besides the large jars, there are small rounded jars, which have neck or neckless red-ridge jars, and some jars with sieve necks such as, spouted pots, goblets, plates, pots, bowls, strainers and round footed plates with finger impressions (see Figure 5.20) (Benediková *et al.* 2008, 27).

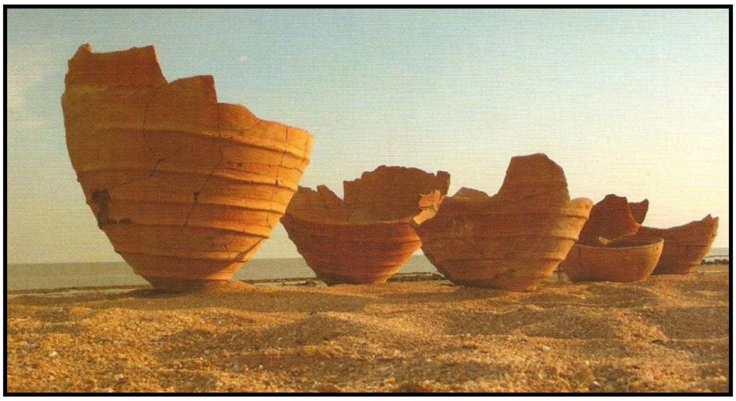


Figure 5.19. Photograph showing large red-ridged jars from al-Khidr (Benediková *et al*. 2008, 8).



Figure 5.20. Photograph showing small jar and plate from al-Khidr (Benediková 2010, 187).

Failaka Island has many types of Bronze Age pottery. Most of them date to the beginning of the second millennium BC (Hojlund 1987, 139-144; Calvet 1986, 14). Some have been imported and others made locally, as can be recognised by the varying clay material. The local pottery consists of a mixture of sand and shells while the majority of the imported pottery (Mesopotamian pottery) contains straw organic materials. Technically, the local pottery was made by hand then enhanced by wheel, but the imported pottery was made solely by wheel (Hajjāwī 2001, 57). In the Bronze Age sites on Failaka Island, there are red pottery fragments of large jars, with black geometric, animal or human decorations. These pottery fragments resemble Wadi Souq pottery in Oman and Bahrain pottery, which date back to the beginning of the second millennium BC (Hajjāwī 2001, 57).

Barbar pottery has also been found on Failaka Island. It is called Barbar because it attributes to the Barbar Village in Bahrain (a very big Dilmun site). This pottery, as well as circular seals, are the most important features of the Dilmun for archaeologists. It consists of red ridged-ware dating to the beginning of the second millennium BC. This pottery has also been found in other areas, such as burial mounds in eastern Saudi Arabia and in al-Khūr in Qatar (al-Thani 1997, 140-2).

Al-Khidr economy

The excavation process at al-Khidr site has revealed 100 date stones (*Phoenix dactylifera*; see Figure 5.21). This suggests that the date from the palm tree was the dominant fruit consumed in the Dilmun periods, as there is little evidence for other fruits being present (Benediková *et al.* 2008, 39; Benediková 2010, 257; Beech 2003, 11). Date also appears to be the staple plant food consumed; there is also limited evidence for barley grains (*Hordeum vulgare*) and wild millet grain (*Panicum turgidum*) (Benediková 2010, 257).



Figure 5.21. Photograph showing date stones (Phoenix dactylifera) from al-Khidr (Benediková *et al.* 2008, 38).

In addition, the excavations have revealed four burnt cereal grains, two chaff pieces in a poor condition (perhaps glumes wheat), five Culm nodes and internodes, which were in a poor condition as well. Such conditions render it difficult to determine if the plants were wild or domesticated (Benediková 2010, 257). At least ten types of fish were found in this site, such as parrotfish, sawfish, jacks, grunts, seabream, emperors, catfish, requiem sharks, groupers and barracudas. This could demonstrate that the inhabitants of this site were incorporating marine resources into their diet (Benediková 2010, 268; Benediková *et al.* 2008, 40-1). Stable Isotope Analysis of human bone might help clarify this in the future. Samples of otoliths were submitted to the laboratory of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research for analysis (see also Chapter 3). Results show that there were seasonal activities. For example, the inhabitants were fishing from spring to summer. Domestic animal bones were found in this site as well, such as goats, sheep and cattle. There was a large quantity of cormorant bones, which indicates the significance of this bird for the inhabitants of ornaments (Benediková *et al.* 2008, 41; Benediková 2010, 269; Bartra *et al.* 2008, 125). Moreover, a fragment of antler has been found in this site, thus perhaps illustrating deer hunting for food, or its use in creating objects (Benediková 2010, 269). At this stage it is impossible to say which protein sources were the dominant. Diet may have been seasonally determined to some extent.

5.2 **Discussion**

Traditionally, many researchers have tried to define and determine the location of Dilmun through historical texts, such as religious writings, literary myths and legends. Others have looked at economic texts and the political documents, which were thought to give a clearer picture of the Dilmun. On their own, such approaches are limited, but I will introduce them here, so that they can be supported by the archaeological evidence.

Henry Rawlinson, who was a leading cuneiform expert of Dilmun, was the first who said that Dilmun is the island of Bahrain whilst commenting on the report of Captain Durand who found a black stone which was the first cuneiform text discovered in the Arabian Gulf (Rice 1984, 54). The text reads: "Palace of Rimoum, who is Enzak servant from Agarum tribe" (Bibby 1984, 64) - the name of Enzak was the stimulus that led Rawlinson to define Dilmun as Bahrain Island. The name of the island was written in the Sumerian word Ni-Tuk and became called Dilmun in the Assyrian Babylonian period; the meaning of Dilmun is still, however, unknown. Many researchers agree with Rawlinson's view that Dilmun was Bahrain (e.g. al-Thani 1997, 25), but this view is also criticised is by others as being inaccurate (e.g. Kramer 1944, 18-28). The recent archaeological discoveries in the Arabian Gulf have supported Rawlinson's (Rice 1984, 54) interpretation by comparison with economic texts from Mesopotamia which indicated eastern trading including Dilmun, Magan and Melukha. Kramer (1944) was one of the first archaeologists who opposed this interpretation. He has several views for an alternative region of Dilmun; basing his interpretation on cuneiform myths and epics. When studying the myth of the flood, he argued that the land of Dilmun was a part of southwest Iran (al-Thani 1997, 24).

Kramer (1944) later stated that Dilmun was the land of ancient India where the civilisations that have flourished during the third millennium BC, "Harappa and Mohen-jo-Daro", based on the translation of the most important myth (Enki and Ninhursag) which states:

> "*The land of Dilmun, where the pure, the clean and the bright. The land that knows no sickness or death, but the lack of fresh water made the god of the sun god Utu to request from the god of the water Enki to give it water and it became beautiful and green garden* " (Kramer 1944, 18-28).

The myth continues to explain that Ninhursag created eight gods, one of whom is Inzak, the master of Dilmun (Kramer 1944, 18-28). This hypothesis suggested that Dilmun was a land blessed with houses and luxury products from various countries. These products reached Dilmun by ships from Melukha, Magan, Eelam and Ur. The text refers in particular to the traders from Melukha who contributed to the transfer of such luxuries. All of these data describe Dilmun's attributes, such as verdant gardens, flowing fresh water and the great rich stores of various products, which made Kramer rule out the possibility that Dilmun was the arid island of Bahrain on the edge of the Arab desert (Kramer 1963, 111-2).

Cronwall (1946) has discussed the views of Kramer (1944; 1963) and concluded that we do not have to rely on the literary texts and legends to determine the locations of old boundaries, because there are political and economic documents as well as archaeological remains in the areas which indicate the location of Dilmun.

Cronwall (1946) refers to two late Assyrian texts. The first text was written in the time of Sargeon II (721 - 705BC) and reads, "The King of Dilmun Uperi... lives as a fish around 30 bero (30 bero = 300 mile) from the middle Sea that the sun rises from". The second text was written in the time of AshurBanipal (668 - 626BC) and described

Dilmun as being situated in the middle of the Near Sea "Arabian Gulf" (al-Bader 1978, 112). Also he explained the archaeological materials that he discovered during his excavations in the hills of Bahrain and in the East Arabian Peninsula. The excavations have been increased with the arrival of the Danish expedition to the region and added a new dimension to this idea, such as, Qalaʻat al-Bahrian as a Dilmun site (al-Thani 1997, 27).

Al-Bader (1978) has criticised Kramer's (1944) location of Dilmun in the east of Sumer and southeast Eelam as being based in solely on flood mythology. Kramer (1944) argued that the Sumerians thought it was from the sea that the sun rises – thus implying that Dilmun is located to the east of Mesopotamia. Also Kramer (1944) claimed that Dilmun was located in the Indus Valley on the bases of the myth of Enki and Ninhursag, which has sacred freshwater and green gardens. Al-Bader (1978) criticized this idea and stated that Bahrain and the east coast of the Arabian Peninsula also have freshwater oases. Freshwater and wells found in Barbar Temples in Bahrain may also indicate ritual worship (al-Bader 1978, 109-16). Tharbar (1975) suggests that the trade centres of Dilmun, Magan and Melukha are located in the Indian subcontinent and Dilmun is located to the west. She put this hypothesis forward after studying the three names of Dilmun, Magan and Meluhha which refer to the Sanskrit language, "one of the ancient Indian languages" (Thapar 1975, 13).

At the beginning of 1980s, Carter (1981) argued that the early Dilmun was in Qurnah which is located at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Carter (1981) relied on mythological descriptions which indicate the fertility and springs of the Dilmun. Carter (1981, 210-23) has since changed her mind and argues that the definition of Dilmun does not refer to one particular place, but also includes Failaka

and Bahrain, with the eastern region of Saudi Arabia, because there are no archaeological remains in Qurnah.

There is a sentence in the Sumerian text which describes the Babylonian state "as the date of Dilmun and it has tasty fruits". This expression is taken by al-Thani (1997, 32) to suggest that Dilmun was a commercial centre for the exchange of luxury goods. On its own, this evidence appears to be tenuous, but al-Thani (1997, 32) argues that the mention of Dilmun is to express its wealth and status as a commercial centre for exchange of goods. Cronwall (1946) indicated a link between the Eastern Arabian Peninsula and Bahrain; therefore, the name of Dilmun includes other areas in addition to Bahrain. He reported that there are six Assyrian texts written during the reign of King Sargon II (721 - 705BC), suggesting that he occupied Bit-Iakin, which is situated on the coast of Murr Sea near the borders of Dilmun (Cronwall 1944, 13). Many archaeologists believe that Bit-Iakin is the area which extends from the east of Arabian Peninsula to Kuwait (al-Bader 1978, 113). These areas have similar cemetery hills which are dated to the Bronze Age; this may indicate similar cultural characteristics between them (Cronwall 1946, 7).

Bibby started his excavations in the island of Tarut in 1964, and noted that this site refers to the civilisation which flourished in Bahrain by the end of the third millennium BC. He called it the Barbar Civilisation (Bibby 1984, 343). Potts (1983) points out that the name of Bahrain, in the beginning of the Islamic Ages, was applied to the whole of the Eastern Arabian Peninsula from Kuwait to the United Arab Emirates. The name migrated; it is possible therefore that the same happened with the name ‘Dilmun’ (Potts 1983, 15-19).

Piesinger (1983) argues that the transmission of the name of Dilmun to Bahrain was due to the low water levels in the Arabian Gulf during the second millennium BC, which directly influenced on the activity of the settlements in the east of the Arabian Peninsula and Bahrain. Although there were low levels of water on the shores of the eastern region, there were still good levels on the coast of Bahrain, which potentially allowed different commercial ships to anchor in its ports.

This brief overview of the issues of determining the location of Dilmun highlights that if we combine archaeological data with literary texts, we can narrow down the sphere of Dilmun culture to operating between the north of the Arabian Gulf and the Indus valley to the south. I think the Dilmun settlements that have been found in Bahrain and Failaka prove that these places were part of the Dilmun civilisation. As there are no settlements known in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula so far, and few seals and Dilmun pottery, it is currently hard to argue that this area was Dilmun.

The Dilmun society had a strong relationship with Mesopotamia and Syria in the north of Arabian Gulf and with the Indus Valley in the south, as suggested by the Mesopotamian inscriptions (al-Safadi 1983, 295-310). The documents of Mesopotamia in Warkaa city at 3200BC mentioned Dilmun imports such as, wood, copper, dates, fabric and metal goods (Nissen 1988, 90). In Lagash in Mesopotamia, there were also documents that discuss the relationship between Lagash and Dilmun. In these official texts, the king of Lagash, reports that he imported wood on Dilmun ships (Baqer 1971, 87).

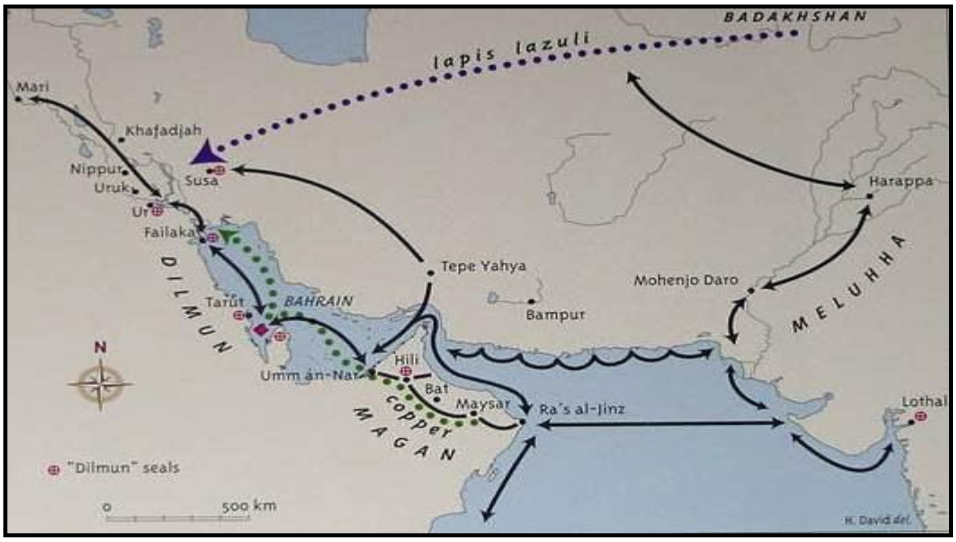


Figure 5.22. Map of possible trade routes (Rice 2002, 382).

As Dilmun was located in the Arabian Gulf, it became a significant trade centre between Mesopotamia and Indus Valley, cited in some Mesopotamian documents such as Akkadian and Melukha (Baqer 1973, 143; al-Thani 1997, 159; see also Figure 5.22). The impressions of clay seals from the Indus Valley city of Harappa demonstrate that they were used to seal bundles of stock, as clay seal impressions with twine marks on the reverse side bear witness. A number of these Indus Valley seals appear in Ur and in some sites in Mesopotamia (Rice 1984, 29). Arabian Gulf types of circular stamps rather than rolled seals, known from Dilmun, have turned up at Lothal in India today and in Failaka Island (Rao 1963, 96-9). This clearly indicates the occurrence of long-distance trading (Rice 1984, 29). In addition, Dilumn seals have been found in Susa, the capital of Elam, which is located in what is now northwest Iran (Amiet 1975, 266).

The commerce of goods consisted of: timber and precious wood, ivory, lapis lazuli, gold and luxury goods such as, carnelian and glazed stone beads, pearls from the Arabian Gulf, shell and bone inlays, as well as woollen fabrics, olive oil and grains. Copper ingots and bitumen, which occurred naturally in Mesopotamia, might

have been exchanged for cotton textiles and domestic fowl, which are major products of Indus Valley area and not native to Mesopotamia (Postgate 1992, 216). Documents and official inscriptions also mention that some Melukhan ships may have sailed directly to Mesopotamia in the Isin- Larsa periods (2350 -1800BC). Dilmun probably monopolised the sea trade between them. From the documents we have evidence to suggest that:

a) tools required for Dilmun workers came to Babel, in Sennacharib (705 - 681BC).

b) relational networks existed between Ashurbanipal and Hundaru (Dilmun king) based on gift exchange (al-Bader 1974, 94-5).

The relationships of Dilmun in the north of the Arabian Gulf extended to Syria; this is indicated in documents found at Ibela and Mari kingdoms in Syria dated to fourth and third millennium BC. These texts described trade exchange networks with their routes and how they were protected (Potts 1986, 397). The Bahrain National Museum proposes that its Golden Age for Dilmun was 2200 - 1600BC. From this time the Indus Valley civilisation gradually and mysteriously collapsed in the middle of the second millennium BC, and this resulted in Dilmun losing its importance as a trading centre between Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley. The decline of the great sea trade with the east probably affected the power shift north-wards observed in Mesopotamia itself (Bushehri 1987, 26).

Following discussions of Karlovsky's (1972) long-distance trade networks in Chapter 3, we can comment on the possible types that existed in the Dilmun. Direct contact trade may have been used between the Dilmun and Mesopotamia or between the Indus Valley and the Dilmun. For example, there are a lot of Dilmun seals which have Mesopotamian inscriptions. These seals may indicate the existence of

Mesopotamian traders who were settled in Dilmun. Exchange trade may have taken place between Dilmun and other places whether they were in the northern or southern Arabian Gulf. For instance, Dilmun seals have been found in several sites in the southern Arabian Gulf such as, Ras al-Jinz site in Oman (Cleuziou 2003, 146), Mazyad grave, near Jabal Hafit, and Tell Abraq in the United Arab Emirates (Cleuziou 1981, 285; Potts 1991, 67). This may indicate trade exchange between the Indus Valley, the southern Arabian Gulf cities, Dilmun and Mesopotamia. Dilmun seals have also been found in large numbers in the Indus Valley. Here, maybe Dilmun traders were living in the Indus Valley and the goods were trading to Dilmun (centre place trade), and finally arriving in Mesopotamia. Three types of trade could have worked with the places that I mentioned above but they gradually developed over time. For instance, the direct contact trade was the earliest type of trade between the Indus Valley and Mesopotamia or Dilmun and Mesopotamia. Then the central place trade developed when the Dilmun became a trading station between the northern and southern Arabian Gulf. Finally, the exchange type trade took over when the Dilmun trading became widespread, as indicated by Dilmun seals being found in many regions.

As we can see, Dilmun had global trade relations with Mesopotamia in the north and with Indus Valley in the south of Arabian Gulf (also known as the Persian Gulf) and this reflects the large-scale scope of the Dilmun civilisation.

The archaeological evidence in both Failaka Island and Bahrain indicates that these two islands were important places in Dilmun society. In my opinion, the island of Failaka was the economic capital of Dilmun, with Bahrain being the religious capital of the Dilmun. The archaeological evidence seems to support this. The adoption of an island to locate specific religious practices is not unknown. For

instance, people at Lindisfarne in the United Kingdom, have been famously worshiping there since AD635.

Firstly, most of the Dilmun archaeological sites in Failaka Island are settlements such as, F3, F6 which has several sites (Governor's Palace, houses and Tower Temple), G3, al-awazim and al-Khidr (Failaka's main port in the past). At these sites there are just two temples. On the other hand, most of the Dilmun sites in Bahrain are temples (e.g. the temple of Qal'at al-Bahrain, Barbar complex temples, Umm al-Sajjur temple, Diraz temple and Saar temple). In addition, most archaeological surveys that have been done in northern Bahrain have revealed many large buildings and the sites excavated to date have exposed many huge buildings that were maybe sacred (Rice 2002, 257). These are obvious Sumerian influences in Barbar temples (Rice 2002, 243; Bibby 1984, 122-25). For example, sacred buildings in Sumer have been built on existing older temples, which needed to be renewed, and this method of construction took place in the Barbar temples. Sumerians were also burying certain things in the base layers of the structures. In one Barbar temple has been found a table, a large quantity of minerals, and about 100 small bowls, all of them broken. Rice (2002, 243) suggests this was for ritual or religious purposes.

Secondly, the number of seals is greater in Failaka than Bahrain (Crawford 2001, 17). For instance, Benediková (2010) stated that 71 seals have been found in al-Khidr (over 600m² excavated). This is a high number when compared with 95 seals found in Saar in Bahrain (over 7500m² excavated) (Killick and Moon 2005, 6). Furthermore, the excavations on Failaka Island by the Danish archaeological team in 1958-1963 have revealed at least 50 cuneiform texts. Most of them have been found at the F3 and F6 sites. These texts were inscribed on different materials, such as cylindrical seals, circular seals, pottery fragments, vessels of steatite and some bronze

bowls. Most of them date back to the Kassite (1530 -1170BC) and the Metanni (1500 -1300BC) periods, in the middle of the second millennium BC (al-Thani 1997, 224).

This demonstrates the significance of Failaka Island during the second millennium BC. Rice (2002) reported that Failaka Island played an important role between the northern and southern Arabian Gulf from the beginning of the second millennium BC. Galssner (1983) studied these cuneiform texts and gave them numbers. Here, I will discuss some examples that I think are important as they indicate different subjects of several areas, such as: text No: 7 (KM 1280). This is a cylindrical seal with two Sumerian names inscribed: Namhani Inim-Ku, which means Namhani son of Inim-Ku. It dates to Ur III period (2112 - 2004BC). Text No: 8 (KM 46) is a cylindrical seal with two Sumerian gods' names engraved on it, Enki and his wife Damgal-nuna. It dates to the ancient Babylon period (1894 - 1595BC). Text No: 40 (KM 1302) has engraved the name of the Dilmun god (Inzak) on the red-ridged ware, and dates to Babylon period (1894 -1595BC). Text No: 29 (KM 1296) is a piece of steatite engraved with the Amorite's personal name (Iamiu), bearing the name of the character of Amore (Iamiu), and here this text presents us with evidence of a relationship between Failaka Island and the Amorite in Syria. It dates to the ancient Babylon period.

There are 20 stamp seals dating to the Kassite period (1530 - 1170BC) and the Metanni period (1500 - 1300 BC); several of them have the Babylonian god (Marduk) engraved on them. Perhaps the most important of these seals is the text No: 13 (KM 1272) where the text can be read as 'Ni – Tuk' which is an ancient sign indicating a Dilmun name. This text is the first local text that mentions the name of Dilmun on Failaka Island. There are only a few cuneiform texts in Bahrain (al-Thani 1997, 227).

I believe that Bahrain was a sacred place where people buried their dead and went on pilgrimage to. This place eventually developed into a trade centre, whilst still maintaining it sacredness. Traders and maybe religious leaders worked here and established trading and the transference of beliefs in Bahrain. This occurrence may also have influence trade activities - for instance, trading goods for people to protect themselves such as, amulets (maybe a Dilmun seal that has the name of a god), or animals that could sacrificed (e.g. sheep or goats), or goods that are used inside temples (e.g. incense or bitumen). For example, in modern day Mecca and Jerusalem, there are sacred places that some people pilgrimage to and beside these scared places trade also occurs. It is worth noting, that these locations have prospered more than their immediate neighbours. In Bahrain there are 170,000 graves and some of them are empty. Maybe they were dug ahead of schedule for people to bury their dead in Dilmun (the sacred place). This may have been a service that had to be purchased (religion meets trade) (Rice 2002, 291).

Karbala is a modern sacred city, and is located about 100km southwest of Baghdad the capital of Iraq. Karbala is a very important city for the Shiites (Islamic doctrine). The Shia sect believe this city is the best place to bury their dead as they see the city as being a part of paradise. Shias come from many different places on pilgrimage and often buy Karbala clay to pray with. Therefore, it has successfully founded trading shops. Dilmun clay maybe had a similar purpose in the past. Finally, there are no graves in Failaka Island and this maybe supports that Failaka Island was predominantly a trade centre while Bahrain was sacred, with some trade opportunities being exploited.

It is possible that some people in Bahrain and Failaka Island were different and that the seals are similar does not necessary reflect that people were the same or had identical senses of identity. For example, most of the Mosques in the Islamic world are built with a rectangular shape. For instance, if you go to Pakistan I am sure you will find most of the Mosques have a rectangular shape and if you go to Egypt or to Morocco you will find very similar building outlines. It is not logical to say these areas have the same people with the same identity, because they are different with differing values. The religious symbols about the Enzak God do not really suggest that they were same people with the same beliefs or politics. For instance, the cross is a symbol of Christianity; we can find it in the east of Europe, west of Europe and on the American continent but that does not mean all of these areas have identical beliefs. Furthermore, the hill graves found at Bahrain have not been found at Failaka Island, and this gives us an indication that maybe these people were different. Moreover, although many of the Arabian Gulf countries have similar sailing boats (e.g. the Boom boat was used for short trips; see Figure 5.23), this does not suggest that the regions share the same views of the world. In these examples, the similarities are matched by the differences in practice and expression.



Figure 5.23. Photograph showing Boom boat in the Arabian Gulf (al-Awadi 1987, 20).

5.3 **Conclusion**

Through the documents of Mesopotamia and archaeological sites in Kuwait, and Bahrain with the spread of Dilmun seals in many regions such as, the Indus Valley, Arabian Gulf and northern Syria, there is no doubt that the Dilmun played a significant trade role in the beginning of the second millennium BC (Rice 2002, 309). Yet the original location of Dilmun is still not fixed. Future excavations in Kuwait, especially in Failaka Island, will hopefully expose new information about the history of the Dilmun civilisation. Some Dilmun sites in Failaka Island are not yet completely excavated. For example, there is a tell in F3 site, which the Danish archaeological team could not excavate as the summer house of Shaikh Ahmed al-Jabr, one of Kuwait's previous rulers (1921-1950), is located there (see Figure 5.24). Furthermore, recently the Kuwaiti archaeological team excavated a site that was not far from G3, and they found structures and Dilmun pottery fragments (see Figure 5.25). This proves that Failaka Island needs more investigations and more excavations because it is still very rich with unexplored archaeology.

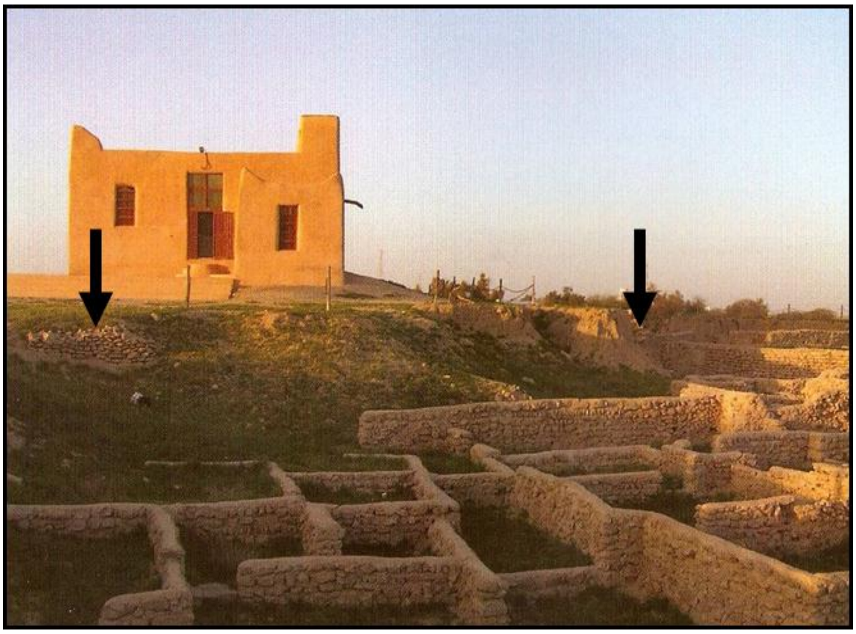


Figure 5.24. Photograph showing F3 and the summer house of Shaikh Ahmed al-Jabr (Benediková *et al*. 2008, 13).



Figure 5.25. Photograph showing site 6 structures (al-Mutairi 2011b, 4).

The Coastline of the Arabian Gulf has been submerged under the sea for over four thousands years. Bronze Age pottery has been found on the Kuwait coastline, perhaps indicating that Kuwait was inhabited in the Dilmun period and maybe more settlements are under the coastal mud of Kuwait (Rice 2002, 310). Furthermore, the Kuwaiti mainland is still uninvestigated (Potts 2003a, 405). In 2008, the Kuwaiti artist Bader al-Mansur found a Dilmun seal with pottery in the mainland of Kuwait (see Figure 5.26). He found it in al-Shidadiya which is located in western Kuwait city, but the area is still unexplored. There is a similar Dilmun seal displayed at the Kuwait National Museum. Al-Mansur stated that he found a black figurine that has inscriptions when he was 11 years old but he lost it. As he an artist he has drawn the figurine as well as he remembers it as a 3D digital image (al-Mansour 2008 pers. comm; see also Figure 5.27). From his drawning I think it seems to be figurine made of steatite.

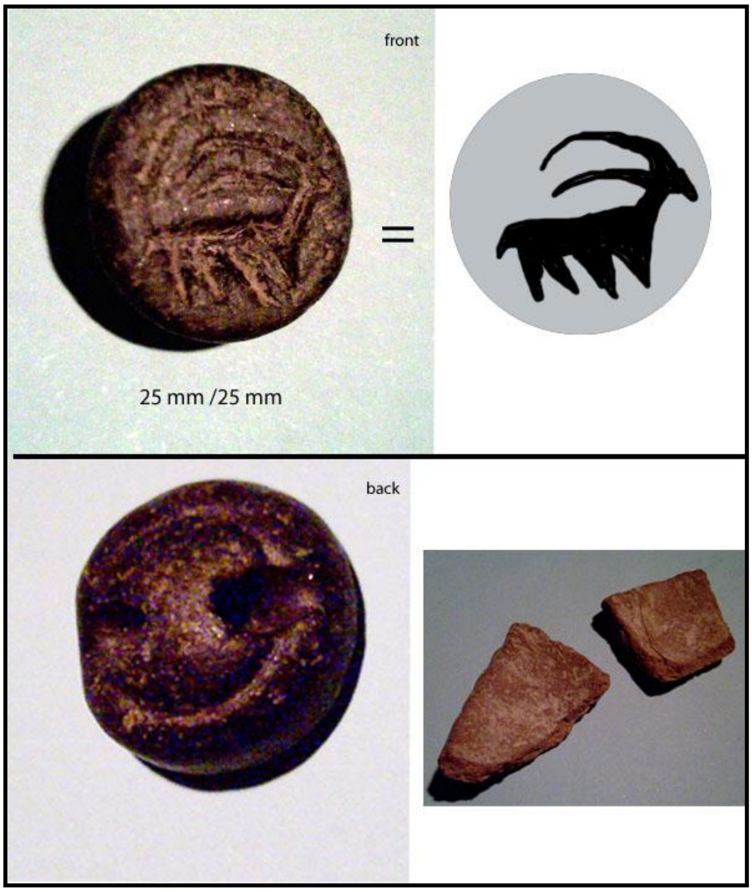


Figure 5.26. Photograph showing a Dilmun seal and some pottery (al-Mansur 2008 pers.comm).

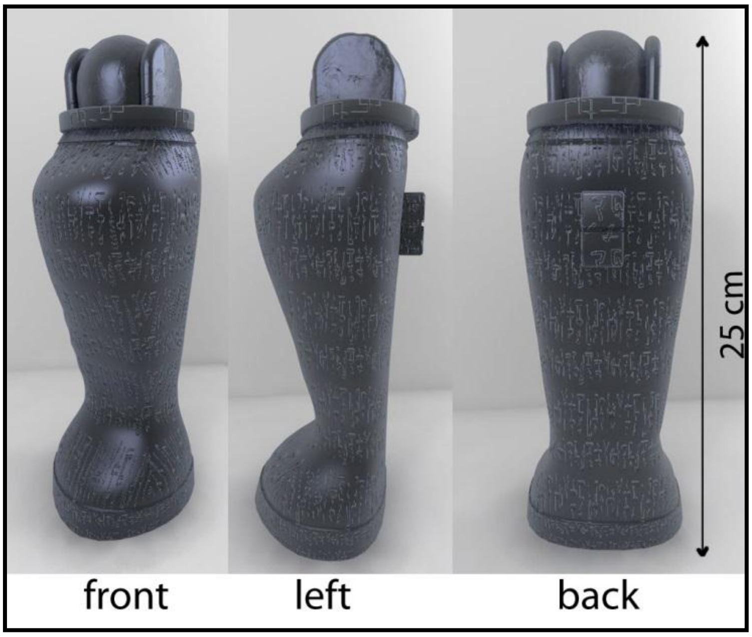


Figure 5.27. 3D digital figurine drawn by al-Mansour (al-Mansur 2008 pers. comm.).

I believe that there are two possibilities surrounding this discovery. Firstly, maybe there is an undiscovered Dilmun settlement in this area. Secondly, this seal was perhaps transferred by traders – the area is located on the mainland trade route between northern and southern Arabian Peninsula. This is also supported by the fact that Dilmun seals have been found in several mainland sites in the southern Arabian Gulf, such as Ras al-Jinz in Oman (Cleuziou 2003, 146). Moreover, most of the burial mounds that are found in Sabbiyah date to the Bronze Age (see Chapter 4). All this evidence demonstrates that there is probability that Kuwait was inhabited during the Dilmun period and this is support by the fact that Kuwait is still largely uninvestigated.

Kuwait was not isolated from adjacent communities in the past. It had relationships with them, extending through economic and religious interactions. This is confirmed by archaeological discoveries in Kuwait. For example, in the Governor's Palace in F6 site the pottery, which has been found in the lower layers, dates to the beginning of the second millennium BC, while the pottery in the top layers dates to the Kassite period (1530 - 1170BC) (Hojlund 1987, 139-144; Calvet 1986, 14). This suggests the continuation of the settlement and relations with other cultures.

5.4 **Summary**

In this chapter I presented the name and the characteristics of the Dilmun civilisation. Moreover, I introduced and discussed the known Kuwaiti Dilmun sites. This information was presented to show that Kuwait was settled in the past by several societies, as we have seen in Chapter 3 the Ubaid Culture, in Chapter 4 Bronze Age cultures, and in this chapter the Dilmun civilisation. These settlements and relations will continue for thousands of years as we will see in next chapters.

Chapter 6

6.1 The proto-Hellenistic and Hellenistic period in Kuwait

When the Greeks arrived in what we now term Kuwait, they did not discover an un-inhabited land lacking in social systems and infrastructures. The key questions are: why were there proto-Hellenistic (the period between Dilmun and the arrival of Alexander the Great to Arabian Gulf) and Hellenistic sites in Kuwait? What is the significance of them being found in Kuwait? This chapter will consider these periods in Kuwait. This is very important in the ancient history and archaeology of Kuwait because it gives us evidence regarding the presence and continuity of human activity in Kuwait. It is also the first time that we have direct evidence for Kuwait being influenced by cultures from the Mediterranean. I will illustrate possible relationships with other places in the Gulf region during these periods, to consider how Mediterranean influences impacted upon the region. Did the region of Kuwait become more or less powerful, in terms of social networks, exchange, cosmological beliefs, during this time? This chapter will detail materials, such as pottery fabrics and building hardcore, to show the scale of connections between regions. In using such thick description, I will tease out the possible Greek influences in Kuwait, before the arrival of Alexander the Great, and into the Hellenistic periods.

6.1.1 The proto-Hellenistic period in Kuwait

Musnad inscriptions in the southern part of Kuwait

A form of writing known as Musnad was common in the southern Arabian Peninsula from the 9th and 8th century BC (Sharaf al-Deen 1970, 13).

Wolfensohn (1980) noted that the recurring theme of southern Arabia in the 8th century BC was to use column construction (Wolfensohn 1980, 224). For example, columns were built into temples, walls, dams and gates. On these columns, writing often occurred – this resulted in the trend of writing letters in columnar form. Some scholars observed this technique and named it Musnad writing (al-Beraihī 2000, 41), which means letters reclining on columns (see Figure 6.1). This writing was used in some of the southern Arabian Kingdoms, such as Saba (800 – 115BC), (Qatban 1000BC – AD150), Hadhramut (500BC – AD300), Himyar (115BC – AD300) and al-Faw Village (300BC – AD400). The Musnad alphabet consists of 29 symbols (al-Beraihī 2000, 42-3).

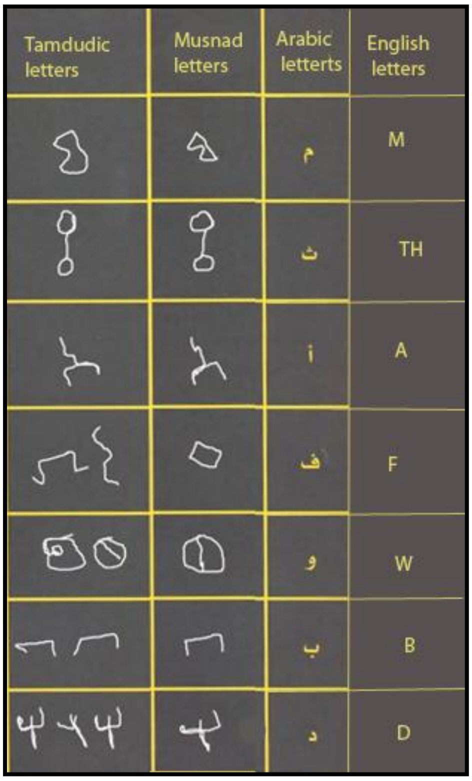


Figure 6.1. Table of some southern Arabian Peninsula writings including Musnad (al-Duweesh 2010b, 13)

The Kuwait archaeological team found near the site of al-Khairan, which is one of the burial mounds (see Chapter 4), a text engraved on a large rock. The inscription was a mixture of modern English and Arabic. It is possible that the English letters were written recently by staff from the local oil fields. The Arabic characters belong to Musnad calligraphy (see Figure 6.2). The first letter is Bā = B and the second letter is Tā = T, and third one is Nūn = N. Al-Duweesh (2003) suggested that this writing dates from the pre-Christian (4th century BC) to the pre-Islamic (AD 5th century) periods (see also Chapter 7), and there is evidence for Musnad text in the pre-Hellenistic site Tell al-Khazna (al-Duweesh 2010b, 10).

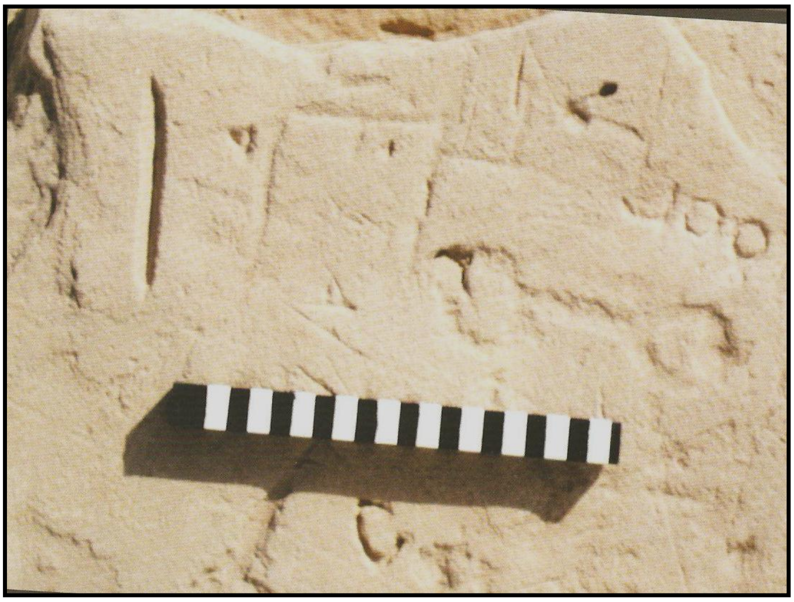


Figure 6.2. Photograph showing Musnad text at al-Khairan (al-Duweesh 2010b, 12).

Tell Al-Khazna

This site is located in the southern corner of the island of Failaka. The island's inhabitants have called this site Tell al-Khazna since the 1930s with al-Khazna meaning treasury. According to a local tale this tell has treasure beneath it, but unfortunately no-one can remove this treasure, as there is a large snake guarding it (Salles 1984a, 107).

The first excavation was undertaken by an Italian archaeological team in 1976. The excavations followed an earlier discovery of a stone bearing a Greek text engraved on it, discovered by island locals in the 1930s. The excavations revealed the head of a figurine and a well that had been dug into the bedrock. They stated that Tell al-Khazna's height is approximately 3.9m above sea level and its diameter is approximately 40m.

The Italian excavations did not define all the layers or the full form of the site. Therefore, the Museum of Kuwait invited a French team to explore the differences in this site in 1984. The French team worked on this site extensively and found that there was a difference in the measurements noted by the Italian team. The French team noted that the height of the site is not more than 1.16m above sea level, while the Italian team stated that the height was 3.9m above sea level. Perhaps the site had eroded since the Italian excavations in 1976 (Salles 1984). In my opinion, some inhabitants of the island contributed to the destruction the site and reduced its height as they used site stones in their constructions. This type of activity has been found in most archaeological sites on Failaka Island. Salles (1984) noted that the site had been looted with the stones being used in local building, and most of the site had disappeared; however, the remnants of the eastern side are still in *situ*.

Architecture

It is difficult to describe the remains of the buildings in Tell al-Khazna, mostly because its sections have been destroyed and looted (see Figure 6.3). The mud brick constructions have been mostly erased without leaving anything above the ground. The excavations could not determine the lines of the walls on the ground, and the outside line of the mud brick could not be observed.

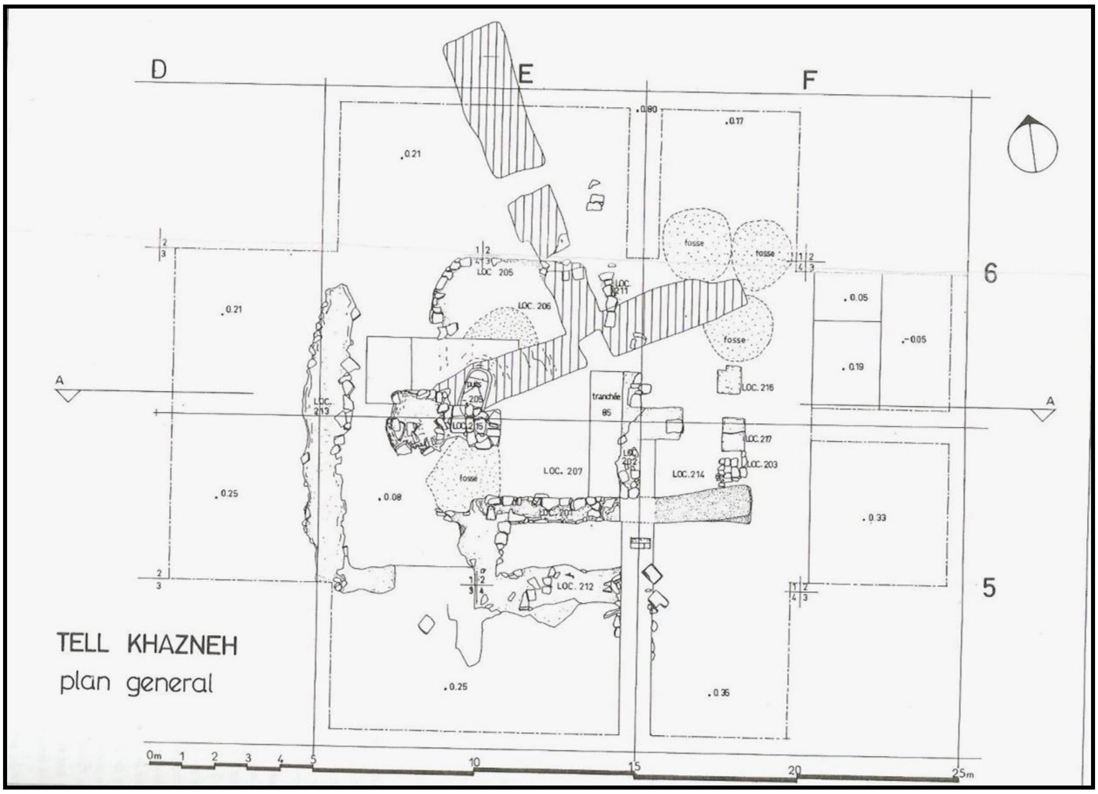


Figure 6.3. Showing Tell al-Khazna plan (Salles 1984, 108).

Stratigraphic observations

During the excavations the main layer of the site was identified. Thus it can be observed that the first building was built on the mid orangey brown coloured natural horizon. This layer was found in most of the surrounding area. This is clear about 20m west of the site where the archaeological context was found 0.30m below the current ground surface. As for the well which was found by the Italian archaeological team, the highest level of water was up to 2.05m below sea level.

The lack of any artifacts in the upper layer of the orangey brown indicates that there was no human activity. Perhaps this is due to the rain that may have played a role in soil moving. For example, they found a fragment of a bowl in the orangey brown while the other pieces of the same bowl were found in level 4.

Most of the ground floor of level 4 overlies the orangey brown deposit, except in a few cases. For example, in square E3/3-4 there are traces of ash at the site. There

are many figurines that adopt a human shape, but the common forms are horses with riders. Moreover, glazed pottery, a coin hoard and a silver set were found. From these findings, the French archaeological team dated this site by relative means to around 400BC. Level 3 is dated to 300BC, and there is nothing to suggest that there were long periods of abandonment or violent episodes between Levels 3 and 4 (Salles 1984a, 117). Although some dressed stones were found, suggesting a prominent building, there is no firm evidence for a structural outline. Level 2 details the full extension of the site, expanding beyond the boundaries of the other levels. The majority of architectural structures found are associated with this level (Salles 1984a, 118). The finds of this level are mostly broken sherds of pottery and figurines (see discussions below). Most of finds are contemporary with the Hellenistic fortress, known as F5 (see below).

The Tell al-Khazna finds

Figurine fragments of figurines

Found at Tell al-Khazna were more than 280 figurines. The French team presented a synthetic study of them based on classifications, such as the subject of the figurines, and technical classifications, such as typology (Salles 1984b, 143).

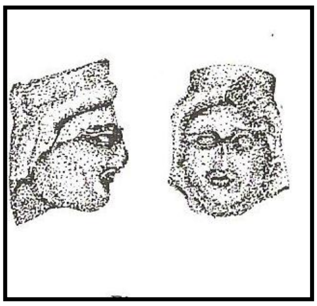


Figure 6.4. Showing Solid, moulded female heads (Salles 1984b, 145).

(a) *Female figurines*

Solid, moulded female heads

A figurine of a woman is seen wearing a crown and her hair plaits are behind the crown, mostly seen in the Classical tradition (see Figure 6.4). It was found in level 3. The clay is a creamy-yellow in colour covered by a whitish slip. The figurine has suffered fire damage; this might have been deliberate or accidental. This horizon does not suggest large-scale fire damage. Its hair is styled with a short cylindrical crown, hollow from the top. In terms of style, it is similar to Hellenistic figurines found in Seleucia on the Tigris (Salles 1984b, 145). The fine ware and clay suggest that this figurine was imported from Hellenistic Mesopotamia.

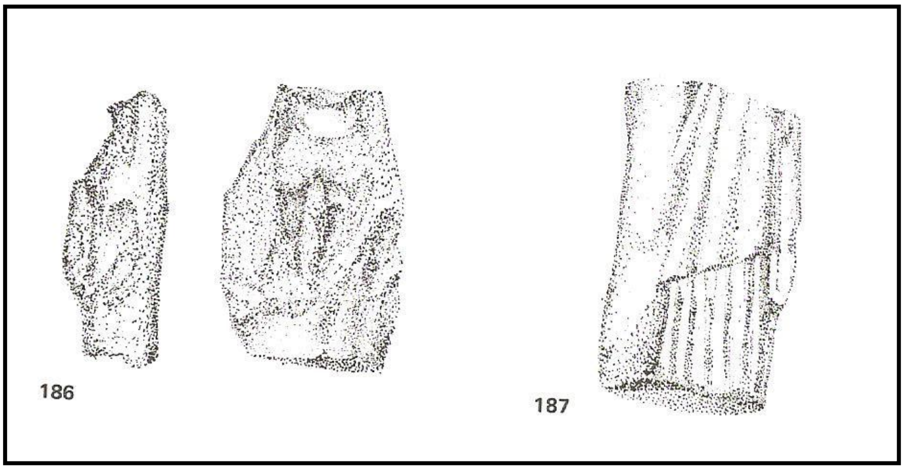


Figure 6.5. Showing fragments of solid moulded female figurines (Salles 1984b, 146 - not to scale).

Fragments of solid moulded female figurine

The left figurine does not have a head, is broken above the chin, and has a necklace (see Figure 6.5). It was found in level 3. The right arm, under the clothes, and the left arm, are broken. The vertically position in the woman's hands recalls the theme of the spring goddess. It could be a woman representing the god of spring because the vertical position in the woman's hands is recalling the theme of the spring goddess. It is made of soft clay and its exterior colour is brownish yellow. It is perhaps not a

Greek figurine because a similar figurine has been found in Uruk-Warka (Salles 1984b, 145).

The right figurine can be traced back to the Hellenistic period (300BC). The right knee is twisted under the vertical draping. It has been found at level 2. It is made of dark yellow clay with fine sandy grits; similar clay is used for pottery. The slip colour is yellow and thick. The mould was not found on Failaka Island (Mathiesen 1982, 51-62). Currently, there is no evidence that the figurines were made on Failaka Island. So far we do not know if these figurines were deliberately broken on the island because there is no evidence at the moment for deliberate breakage.



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Figure 6.6. Showing fragments of hollow, moulded female figurines (Salles 1984b, 195).

Fragments of hollow, moulded female figurine

The figurine looks as if it is wearing a dress, which has pleats running from what would be the breast to the hem of the dress; it is made of yellow clay. It is at least 20cm high (Salles 1984b; see Figure 6.6). A similar figurine was found in Seleucia and Susa in Iran. It was found at level 2. There was a similar figurine found in Seleucia and Susa in Iran (Sally 1984b, 147).

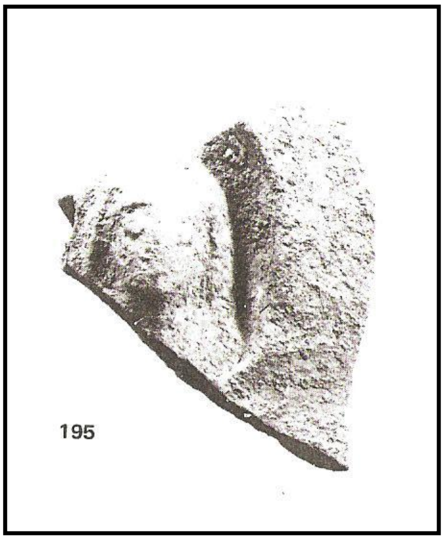


Figure 6.7. Showing plaque figurines, nude female (Salles 1984b, 197 – no scale available).

Plaque figurines, nude female

Salles (1984b) noted that this figurine is of a woman with a narrow and elongated face. Its mouth and nose are broken and it has small eyes (see Figure 6.7). It has been found at level 4. A veil covers the head and seems to fasten on the forehead. It is made of soft clay. There was a similar figurine found in Uruk-Warka (Sally 1984b, 148). I think there are other possibilities, it could be a girl, a boy or even a goddess.

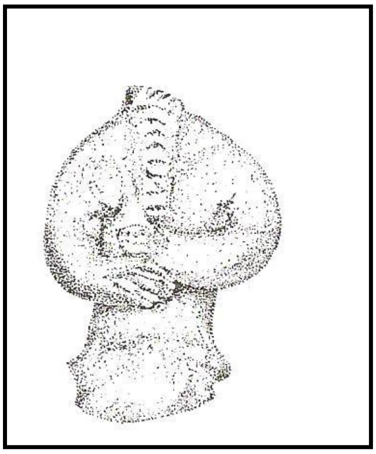


Figure 6.8. Showing male figurine (Salles 1984b, 150 – not to scale).

(b) *Male figurine*

This is a standing figurine without any clothes or musculature features (see Figure 6.8). It has an arched back and paunch. Its hands have taken the form of lines extended to the abdomen. It holds something like a long beard and it has low shoulders. The head is broken. It made of yellow clay mixed with sand. It is similar to Neo-Assyria and Babylon figurines. It has been found through the cleanings of the excavation of Italian archaeological team and has no context (Salles 1984b, 150).

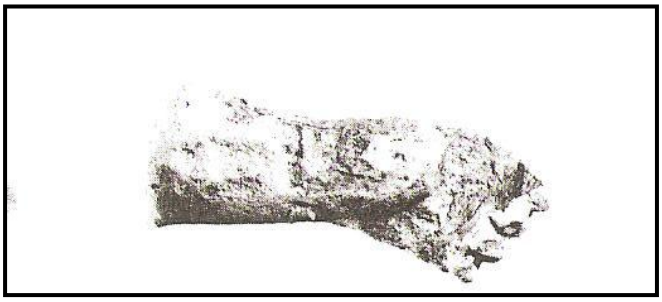


Figure 6.9. Showing fragment of human figurine (Salles 1984b, 196 – no scale available).

(c) *Fragments of human figurine*

This figurine has two hands. On the left hand, the four fingers are present but the thumb is broken (see Figure 6.9). It probably held a cylindrical object with a diameter of about 0.6cm, that was not discovered. The hand is made of orange clay mixed with

black sand. It has been found at level 2. This figurine is unique, as to date similar figurines have not been discovered on other sites in the regions, for example, Seleucia or Uruk-Warka. This figurine also does not have any style links to Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984b, 150).

(d) *Persian rider*

Figurines of this type are referred to as ‘Persian riders’, with the rider and horse being made from one ball of clay. The rider’s body appears as a disc and there were no appendage details, such as arms or clothes. The face is embossed and has a beard. The body and the head of the horse were narrow. The clay has a dark brown/red colour. It is ground with fine sand grits and mica. There has not been anything similar to this type found in the other Hellenistic sites at Failaka Island. This may indicate that the Persians (Achaemenians) were at Tell al-Khazna or that there was exchange with Persia.

(e) *The horses*

Many rough heads of horses were found. They do not have a mane and are made of coarse straw- tempered clay fabric (see Figure 6.10).

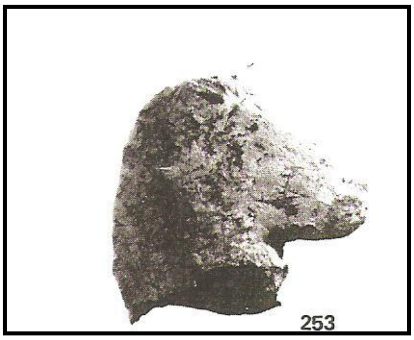


Figure 6.10. Showing horse head at Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984b, 198 – no scale available).

This horse head is different to the other. It is made of dark reddish clay mixed with fine sand grits. At the moment, the horse-headed object is unique to Failaka Island with no similar types being found at Uruk-warka, Nippur, Seleucia and Susa (Salles 1984b, 163; also see the map in the Figure 6.11).

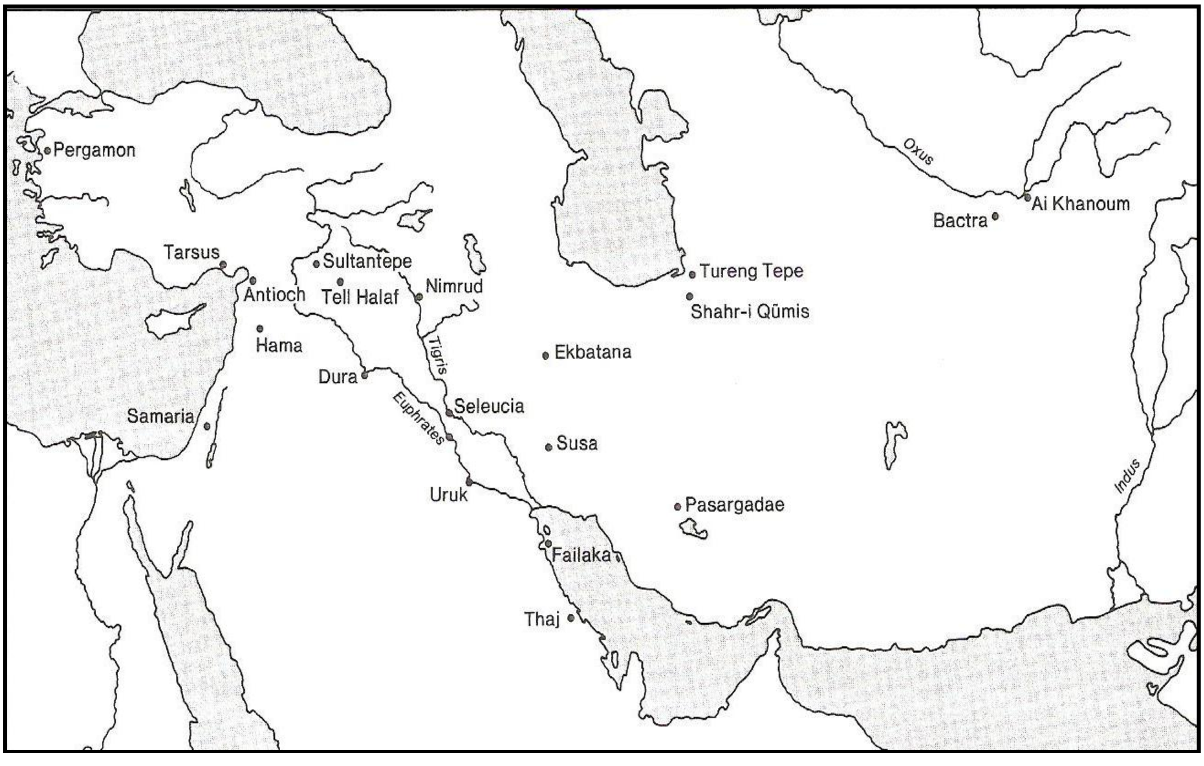


Figure.6.11. Schematic map showing proto-Hellenistic and Hellenistic sites (Hannestad 1983, 82 – not to scale).



Figure 6.12. Showing body or neck of a camel (Salles 1984b, 199 – no scale available).

(f) *Figurines of various animals*

This figurine seems to be a body or neck of a camel (see Figure 6.12). It is moulded of a coarse ochre clay, without surface treatment. The tail is broken. There were similar figurines found in Uruk. Most of the Uruk camel figurines date to the first millennium BC (Salles 1984b, 167). Figurines have been found in Thaj in eastern Arabia, a site which dates to the Hellenistic period 300BC (Bibby 1973, 34).

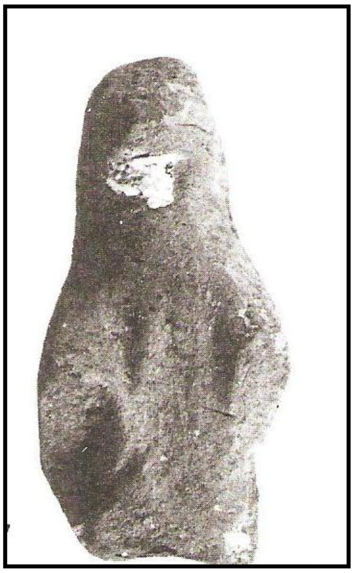


Figure 6.13. Showing a small animal that looks like monkey (Salles 1984b, 200 – no scale available).

Another figurine is a small animal. Its body is broken and the upper limbs are missing. It has a circular head and the muzzle is elongated (see Figure 6.13). The mouth is formed by a single line in the face. There are no eyes or ears. It made of orange clay. Salles (1984) stated that this figurine appears to be a small monkey. It differs from those found in Mesopotamia and Iran (Salles 1984b, 167). To see this as a monkey does, however, require a very active imagination. If representational descriptions are required, it looks more like a women dressed in an Abaya (Traditional Muslim clothing).

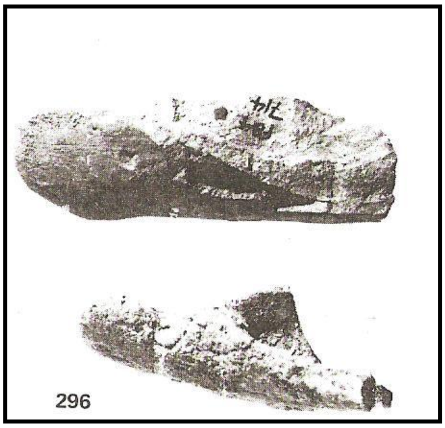


Figure 6.14 Showing possible maritime figurines (Salles 1984b, 200 – no scale available).

(g) *Boat*

This appears to be fragments from models of a boat, including prow and stern. Their form suggests that they belong to a very long boat, but it is different from the known prehistoric examples known (see Chapter 3; see Figure 6.14). Perhaps it is a long narrow boat, similar to those still used in the Gulf regions today (Salles 1984b, 170). At this stage it is difficult to determine due to the fragmentary condition of the objects.

Tell al-Khazna Pottery

Five types of pottery have been found at the Tell al-Khazna site. These typological categories were created using terms derived from pottery traditions external to Kuwait, such as glazed ware, fine ware, common ware, Arabian ware and non-local pottery. Examples made with orange and beige clay are probably originally from Failaka Island, while ones made from red clay are less certain (Salles 1984c, 214).

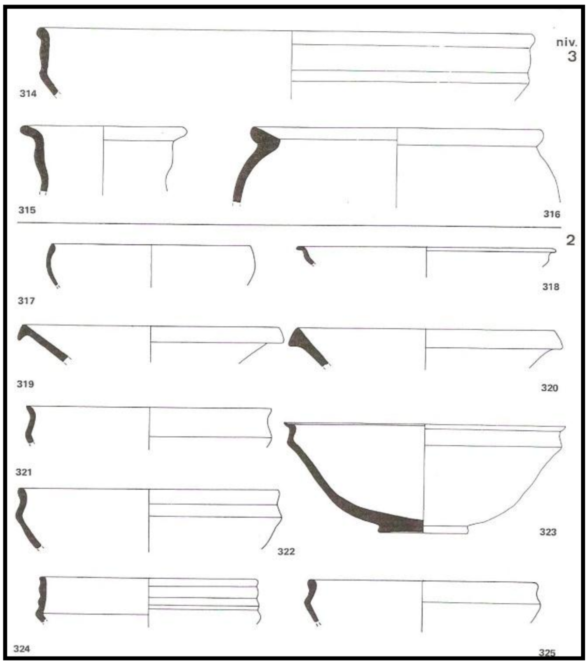


Figure 6.15. Showing glaze ware at Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984c, 209 – not to scale).

(a) *Glazed ware*

Several pieces of glazed ware were found at this site (see Figure 6.15). Most of them were rim and base fragments. Level 2 has about 20% of pottery, while level 3-4 has about 40% of the total pottery found on site.

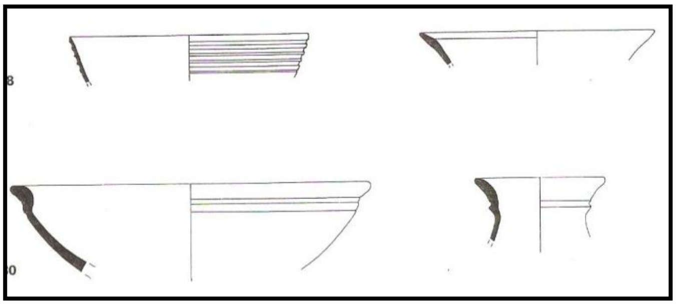


Figure 6.16. Showing fine ware (eggshell) at Tell al-Khazna (Salled 1984c, 213 – not to scale).

(b) *The fine ware*

The eggshell pottery at the Tell al-Khazna site is rare (see Figure 6.16). For example, there is a rim of a small bowl that has a thin wall with the exterior decorated with horizontal lines. There was a similar piece to this found at Tell al-Dor in the United Arab Emirates. It is mostly made of orange/beige/yellowish clay, and this clay was used for glazed ware and vessels. This type of clay suggests that the pottery was made locally on the island – but following styles from elsewhere, such as Seleucia on the Tigris.

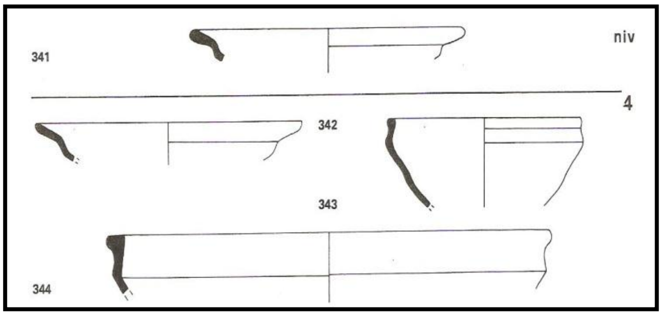


Figure 6.17. Showing common ware at Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984c, 215 - not to scale).

(c) *The common ware*

This type is common in several regions, such as Mesopotamia and Bahrain (see Figure 6.17). For example, bowls has been found in many sites, such as Qala'at al-Bahrain, Neo-Assyria and Neo-Babylon and Susa (Salles 1984c, 214).

Moreover, there are many pots with handles, which are similar to Ur ware. This type was common during the Neo–Babylon and Achaemenian periods and continued to the Hellenistic period (Hannestad 1983, 51).

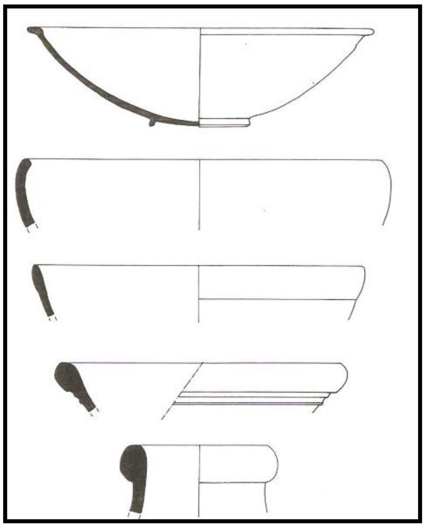


Figure 6.18. Showing Arabian ware at Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984c, 223 - not to scale).

(d) *Arabian ware*

There are no known parallels of this pottery type in Mesopotamia and Iran, but it has been found in Eastern Arabia, Bahrain and Oman (see Figure 6.18). Arabian pottery has been found at the Tell al-Khazna site, known there as Coarse Red Ware. The Arabian ware is formed from beige clay with vegetal temper, suggesting that it is made locally. Examples of this ware are also found on Bahrain, but the clays there are dark red and purple in colour. The pottery dates to the second millennium BC; this may suggest that this site was used during that period (Salles 1984c, 221).

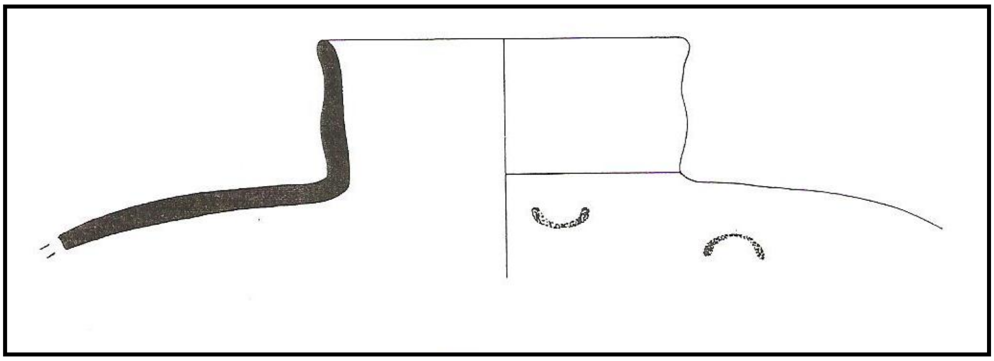


Figure 6.19. Showing non-local pottery at Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984c, 227 - not to scale).

(e) *Non- local pottery*

This typological term does not imply that the other pottery categories were local, or indeed that some non-local ware was not made on the island, but instead references existing categories. All of them have been found in level 3. For example (see Figure 6.19), the neck of a jar found at Tell al-Khazna, which is unlike anything found on Failaka Island. It has two moon-crescents on the shoulder. The orange clay looks to be vitrified (Salles 1984c, 227-8). Most of the pottery of this type does appear to have been imported. Interestingly, this pottery style is only found in Level 3 of the site, when foreign influences are most seen (Salles 1984c, 226).

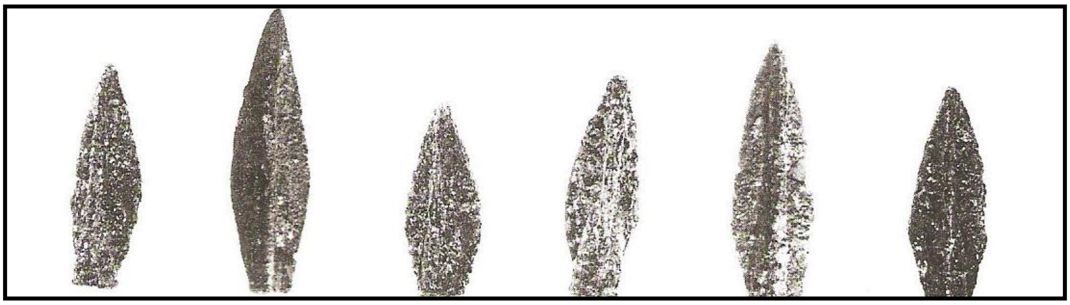


Figure 6.20. Showing arrowheads that were found at Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984d, 257 – no scale available).

Small objects at Tell al-Khazna

(a) *Weapons*

Arrowheads were found at the site in square E during cleaning the Italian excavation, and they are very common in the Gulf (see Figure 6.20). For example, they have been found in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. The sockets are narrow and the lobes are thick. Similar arrowheads have also been found in Pasargade, Susa and Uruk, which date to the 5th century BC when the Achaemenians controlled the region. It might be related to the Achaemenian force on Failaka Island (Salles 1984d, 246).

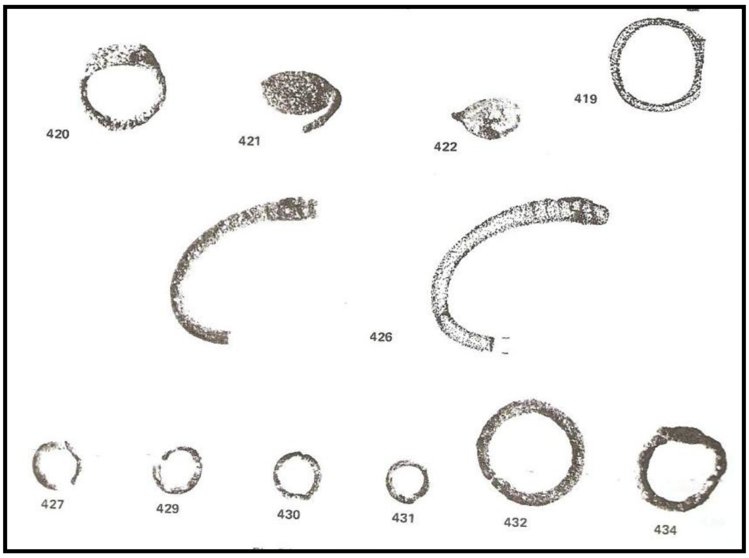


Figure 6.21. Showing several ornaments from Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984d, 257 - not to scale).

(b) *Bezel-rings, bracelet*

There were several bronze bezel rings found at level 2 in Tell al-Khazna. The bezel is very big and takes an oval shape (see Figure 6.21). The ring diameter is about 2.4cm and the bezel diameter is about 28 x 22cm. There was a similar ring found in Susa and a similar bezel ring found at Pasargadae in the Achaemenian level (Stronch 1978, 45). These bezel rings are common in the Hellenistic period as well (Salles 1984d, 247). One of the bronze bezel rings, however, is decorated with a winged lion; this image is rare in the Hellenistic world, and may therefore be a Failakan device.

There were fragments of a bronze bracelet or bangle. The bangle is thin and decorated with an animal head, which looks like a snake. Its length is about 35cm and its diameter is about 3.5cm. Similar bangles have been found at Susa, which date to the Achaemenian period (Salles 1984d, 247).

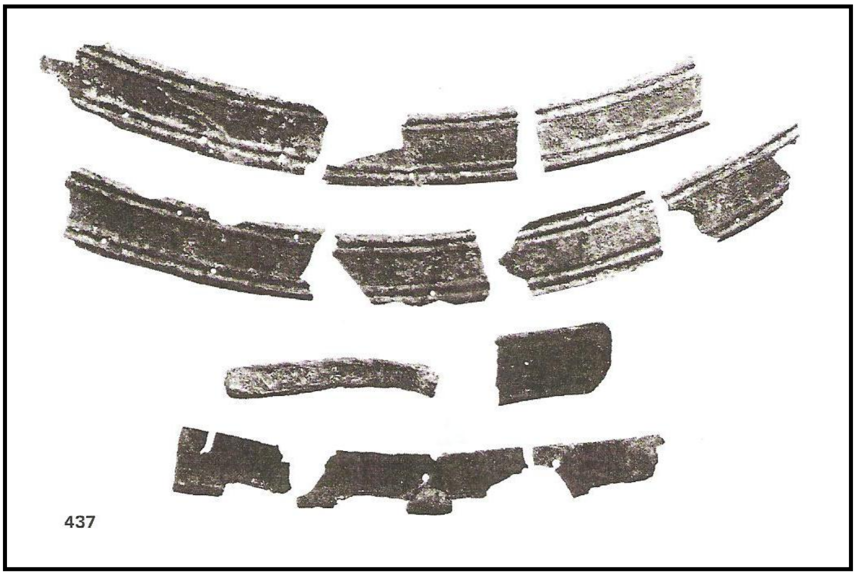


Figure.6.22. Showing belt ornaments from Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984d, 258 – no scale available).

(c) *Belt ornament*

Found were approximately 20 pieces of bronze in Level 2 (see Figure 6.22). They take a circular shape. They have small lines engraved on both sides. They are about 2cm thick and their width is about 28cm. There are many carvings on them; some may be from repair work. They look like they belong to a belt or a shoulder belt (Salles 1984d, 249).

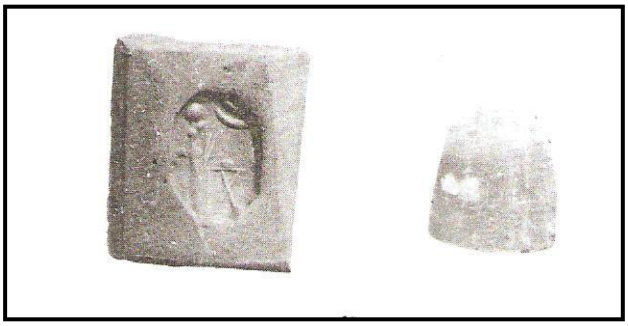


Figure 6.23. Showing stamp seal at Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984d, 259 – no scale available).

The stone objects

(a) *Stamp seal*

This is a stamp seal of pyramidal shape, circular from the top and convex to the base (see Figure 6.23). Salles (1984) reported that this stamp has a worshipper drawn on it. This worshipper is facing a small altar that has sphere on it. On the upper of the stamp there is a crescent. Perhaps this indicates a religious object. Achmenaenians used this style during the 5th century BC (Zettler 1979, 257-70). I think there are many possibilities to explainthis stamp seal. For example, it could be an astrologer recording the moon at his desk, or just a human at a table.

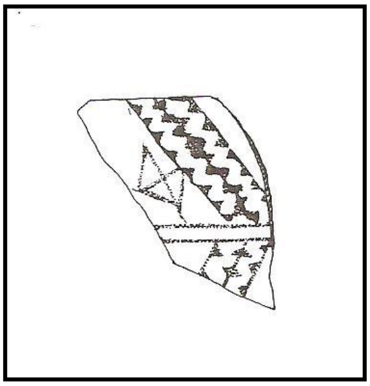


Figure 6.24. Showing a fragment of steatite ware found at Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984d, 252 – not to scale).

(b) *Steatite ware*

There was fragment of a steatite bowl found at Tell al-Khazna. It has a straight rim with zigzag lines. Its height is about 4cm and its diameter about 87cm. Everted-rim bowls were common in Bahrain and Oman during the Iron Age and in Eastern Arabia during the Hellenistic period (Zarins1978, 92; see Figure 6.24). The zigzag lines were common during the 1st century BC (Salles 1984d, 252). This may indicate connections or exchange between Failaka Island and other area that mentioned above.

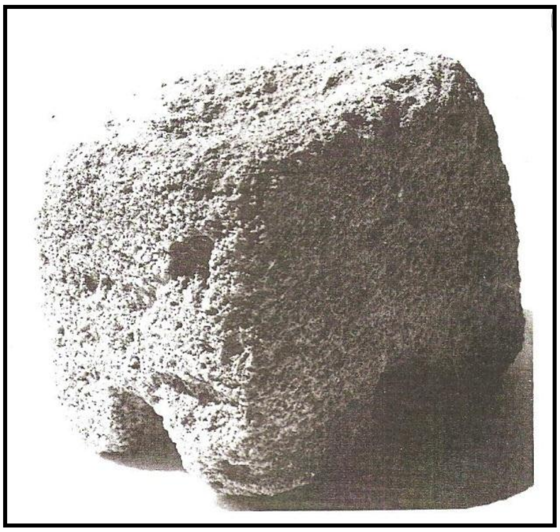


Figure 6.25. Showing incense-burner at Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984d, 259 – no scale available).

(c) *Incense-burner*

Salles (1984) reported that this stone object was an incense-burner (see Figure 6.25). It has been found in level 2. Its diameter is about 9cm and about 65cm height and about 7cm wide. A similar stone was found in the Hellenistic site B6 in Failaka. Incense-burners were common in Mesopotamia and south Arabia during 9th century BC and continued to the 1st century BC (Salles 1984d, 252-3).

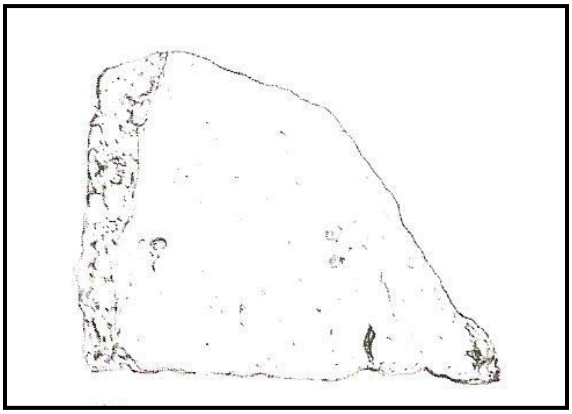


Figure 6.26. Showing a corner of a rectangular basin found at Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984d, 254 - not to scale).

(d) *Domestic objects and basins*

There were some domestic objects and basins found at the site that appear to be locally made. For example, there was a corner of a rectangular basin with a flat base; it was coarse and contained sand from local white stone (see Figure 6.26). The external wall was polished and was carefully made. The internal wall was very rough and the edge was broken. The length of basin fragment is 18cm and its width is about 15cm (Salles 1984d, 253).

(e) *Stone tools*

Three fish nets and a fragment of a grinding stone were found at Tell al- Khazna. The grinding stone is coarse and is fashioned from the whitish local sandstone; this indicates that it was made on the island. Its diameter is about 45cm and height is about 6cm (Salles 1984d, 255).



Figure.6.27. Showing Greek inscriptions on fragment of pottery (Jaubert 1984, 266).

Greek inscription at Tell al-Khazna

Evidence for Greek inscriptions have been found at Tell al-Khazna**.** There were three lines of Greek letters on a fragment of pottery (see Figure 6.27). This inscription is often described as a kind of manuscript on clay (Jaubert 1984, 265). It is a commemorative text describing human sacrifices that may have been performed on this site. This may indicate that this site was used for religious purposes, or perhaps this fragment demonstrates the worship of a deity who was known to the island, such as Artemis. Unfortunately, there is no link between this fragment and other pieces at the site. The fragment is slightly curved and has an exterior sloping rim with a yellow slip from inside. Its width is about 7cm and its height is about 45cm. It may be dated to 250BC (Jaubert 1984, 265-6).

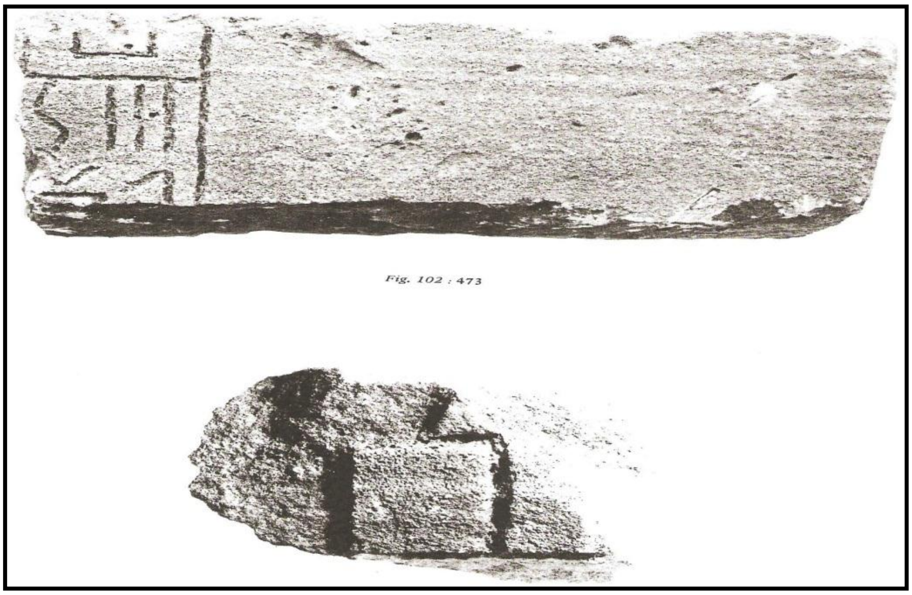
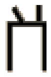


Figure 6.28. Showing two pieces of rock possibly containing Thamudic letters (Robin 1984, 272).

Southern Arabian inscriptions

During the 1984 excavations, two geometrically shaped signs were found engraved into a rock. They could belong to Southern Arabian texts – such writings were common in Mesopotamia and the Arabian Gulf. This piece of rock takes a rectangular form. Its height is about 16cm, is 20cm wide and 18cm thick (see Figure 6.28). There are two boxes on the left side. From the upper part one can see two lines on the left and right, and from the inside, an incomplete rectangular form. It may form the letter:

 which is a Southern Arabian letter which translates as the letter D (Robin 1984, 270).

From the lower part one can see two lines: the first line can be read from the right to the left. There are three vertical bars followed by a snake-like sign. They could be numbers (Robin 1984, 271). The second line has a  sign, which translates as the letter I. There is damage to the left side of the sign. Possibly it was the basis of a V sign, but there is no similar sign in Southern Arabian writing. Therefore, it could be Thamudic writing (400BC)  which means > or S (see Figure 6.29).There was also another fragment of stone that has the same sign (Robin 1984, 271).

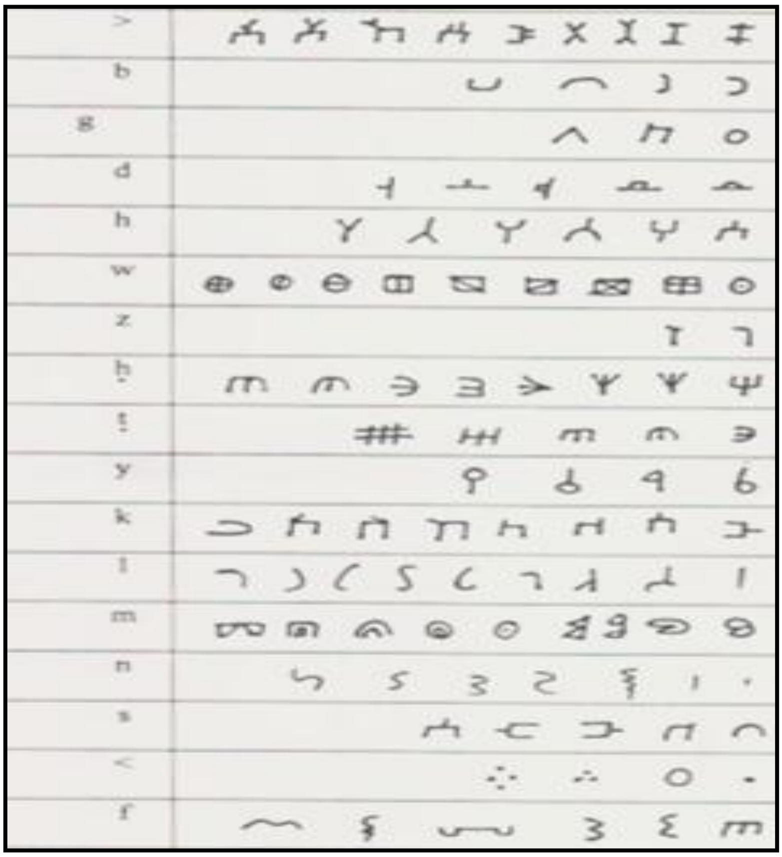


Figure 6.29. Showing the Thamudic letters (Ababnih 2006, 115).



Figure.6.30. Showing a rock that has Aramaic inscription (Sznycer 1984, 279).

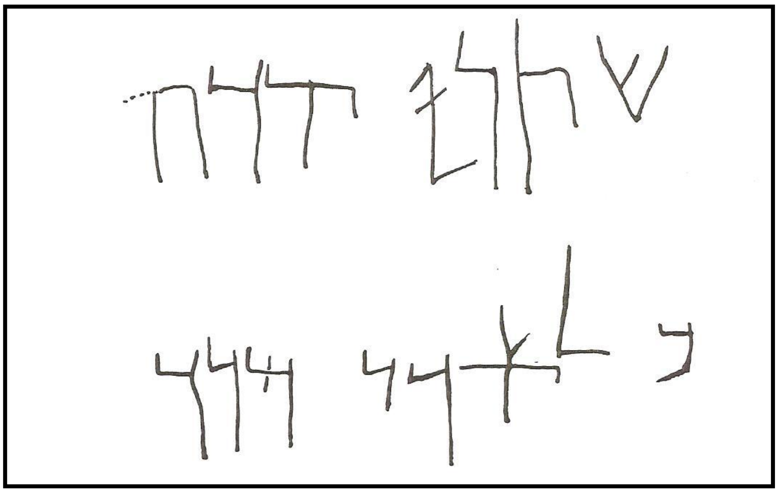


Figure.6.31. Showing the copy of Aramaic inscription on the rock (Sznycer 1984, 274).

Aramaic inscription

There was a rock with an incomplete Aramaic text found at Tell al-Khazna (see Figures 6.30 and 6.31). It was found in the oldest layers, which were in levels 3-2, and dates to between 300 and 150BC. It was formed from coarse local sandstone. Its length is about 41cm, height 33cm and thickness 19cm. The text was composed of two incomplete lines. The first line has seven signs and the second line has eight. They were clearly Aramaic writings as they can be compared with the inscriptions in

the surrounding area, such as Taima in northern Saudi Arabia (Sznycer 1984, 273). Moreover, there were similar writings in several sites in Anatolia, such as Daskyleion, Gözneh, Kesecek, Sardis, Bahadirli and Saraïdin (Sznycer 1984, 275; see Figure 6.32). This may indicate possible relationships between Failaka Island and Anatolia at that time. These relationships may have worked via trade routes on the mainland from Anatolia, northern Arabia to the eastern coast of Arabia. A form of trade exchange (see Chapter 3), possibly took place between Kuwait land and Anatolia. For example, a trade route caravan, starting in Anatolia could have passed several trade stations on its way, such as Syria, Nabataea (Jordan), Taima, en route to Kuwait and Failaka Island. Trade exchange could have continued from Kuwait, specifically Failaka Island, spreading to the adjacent areas such as Susa (northwest Iran) where Aramaic inscriptions dating to the Hellenistic period were found. Aramaic coin inscriptions have been found in Thaj, al-Hufuf and ‘Ain Jawan (Smith, Smart and Pridham 1997, 237).

All of these sites are located on the Eastern Arabian Peninsula and date to the Hellenistic period. It seems that the Aramaic language was common in northern Arabia (Taylor 2002, 151), and northwest Persia from Achaemind (500 - 330BC) to Sassanian (AD224 - AD637; see Beyer 1986, 14-20). The Aramaic language may therefore have helped facilitate trading between Failaka, Susa and the wider Arabian Gulf, as documented in the archaeological record.

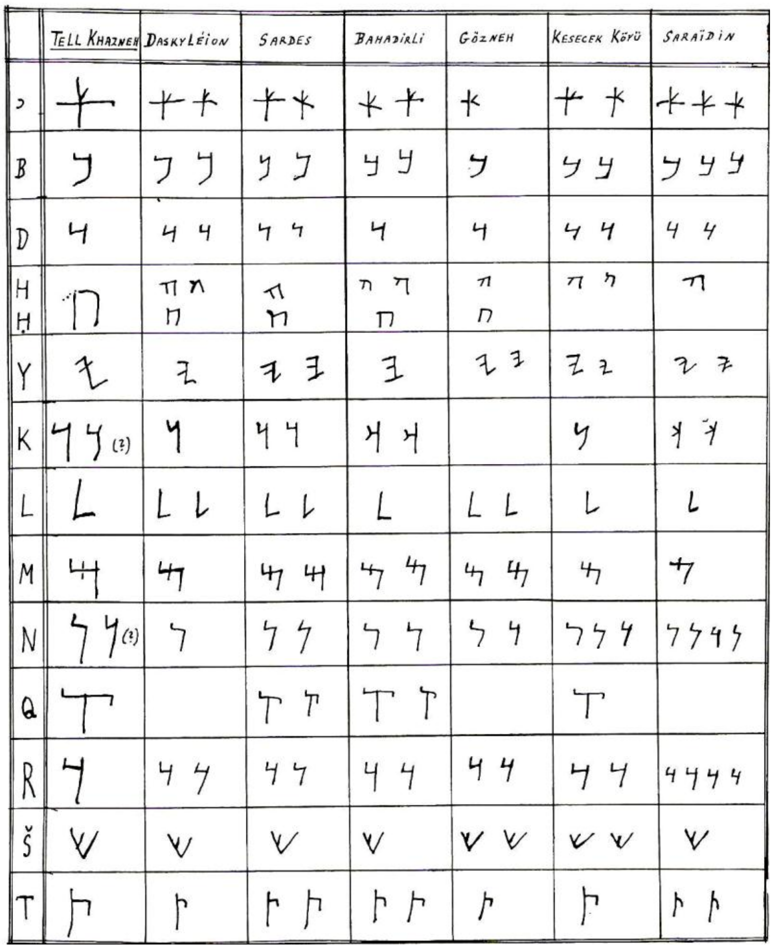


Figure 6.32. Showing a table of comparative scripts between Tell al-Khazna and some sites in Anatoilia (Robin 1984, 277).

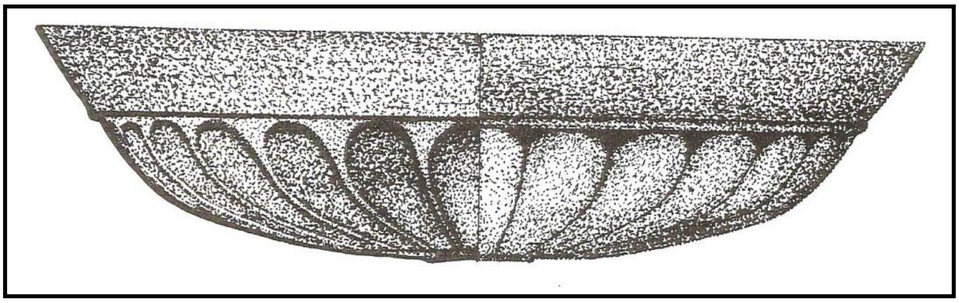


Figure 6.33. Showing silver bowl at Tell al-Khazna (Lombard 1984, 283).

Three pieces of silver at Tell al-Khazna

Part of a silver drinking set was found at Tell al-Khazna consisting of a silver bowl with a rim, a circular stand and a silver spoon (see Figure 6.33). The bowl is decorated with 24 flat gadroons. Its height is about 41cm, 17cm in diameter and 15cm thick (Lombard 1984, 283-4). These bowl and stand are 99% silver. This suggests that they may have been high status; at the very least they are brittle. Such high silver composition meant that they had to be overlain with copper foil, and then another layer of silver. The strengthening effects of this would have been negligible, meaning that the objects were fragile; they were probably better to look at and contemplate, than to touch and manipulate. The spoon is heavily corroded, but there appears to be an animal decoration on the end of the handle. The spoon form is common in both Greece and the Near East (Lombard 1984, 285).



Figure 6.34. Showing the coin hoard before cleaning (Callot 1984, 296).

Coin hoard at Tell al-Khazna

A coin hoard was found between levels 3 and 4 in a bad condition and corroded into a ball shape (see Figure 6.34). This hoard of coins was sent to the Cabinet des Médailles, Bibliothéque National, Paris, under the supervision of the Head-Cuartor Mrs Nicolet. In Paris it was conserved and then sent back to Kuwait. It contains several silver coins. There were approximately 27 silver coins, including silver tetra-drachmas of Alexander the Great, as well as some coins from Phoenicia and Mesopotamia coins including Babylon and Seleucia. There are also some coins from Susa (in Iran) coins. All the coins date to the 3rd century BC (Callot 1984, 291), and appear to have been made outside the Arabian Gulf. Although there is no stratigraphic relationship between the coins and the silver drinking set, it is thought that they are contemporaneous (Lombard 1984, 281). The coins indicate that there were exchange networks in place, and that they potentially stretched to the Mediterranean.

6.2 Hellenistic Period in Kuwait

It has been suggested that the ancient Greeks' knowledge of the Arabian Peninsula was limited to it being a source of incense, frankincense and cinnamon (al-Wohaibi 2011, 4; al-Jiro 2010, 99-133). The incense was a common material in the ancient Greek world, where it was burnt in temples (al-Wohaibi 2011, 4). The ancient Greeks came to Failaka at the end of the fourth century BC, before the death of Alexander the Great (323BC). The Greeks established docks and trade-stations along the eastern coast of Arabia, such as Failaka, Thaj, Qala'at al-Bahrain and al-Dor. Alexander the Great after gaining control of India, explored the western bank of the Arabian Gulf (Potts, Mughannum, Frye and Sander 1998, 10; al-Wohaibi 2011, 7).

Three Hellenistic sites have been found at Failaka Island: B6 (coastal temple), F4 (termed the Guest house) and F5 also known as the Hellenistic fort.

6.2.1 B6 the Costal Temple

This site is located to the southeast of the Hellenistic Fortress on the coast of Failaka Island. It is a rectangular building, approximately 20m long and 12m wide. It consists of a small yard and room. In it were found many figurines which might be related to religious practices or a belief system. This site was discovered by the Danish archaeological team (1954-1963). Excavations continued later by the French archaeological team in 1982 (Potts 2003b**,** 903-4; Shehab 2007a, 19).

6.2.2 F4 or Guest house

This site is located near the eastern coast of Failaka Island. The excavations revealed of building containing 12 rooms. Two rooms of the middle were built from famous Babylonian tile (baked bricks). This might indicate that these bricks were imported from Mesopotamia. The tile may represent disused ballast from ships, or tradable commodity in its own right, maybe being exchanged for bitumen. Either way, that it forms the building material for the rooms, does suggest that connections existed with Mesopotamia as some level. Many moulds of figurines were found in one of these rooms. The Department of Antiquity in Kuwait termed this site a ‘Guest house’, but it seems that it was also used as a figurine workshop or as a shelter supplying the local ships (Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 415; Potts 2003b, 905-6; Shehab 2007a, 18).

6.2.3 F5 the Hellenistic fort

F5 site is locally known as Tell Sa'id (see Figur 6.35). This tell is about 3.5m high and 50m wide. F5 or Tell Sa'id is located in the southwest corner of Failaka Island. Danish (1959-63), American (1972) and French (1983-88) teams have all excavated here. Inside the castle were discovered two temples (Antiquity Department 2000, 31; Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 414-5; Jeppesen 1989, 16-21; Potts 2003b, 893-4; Gachet and Salles 1984, 297; Carter 1972, 18).

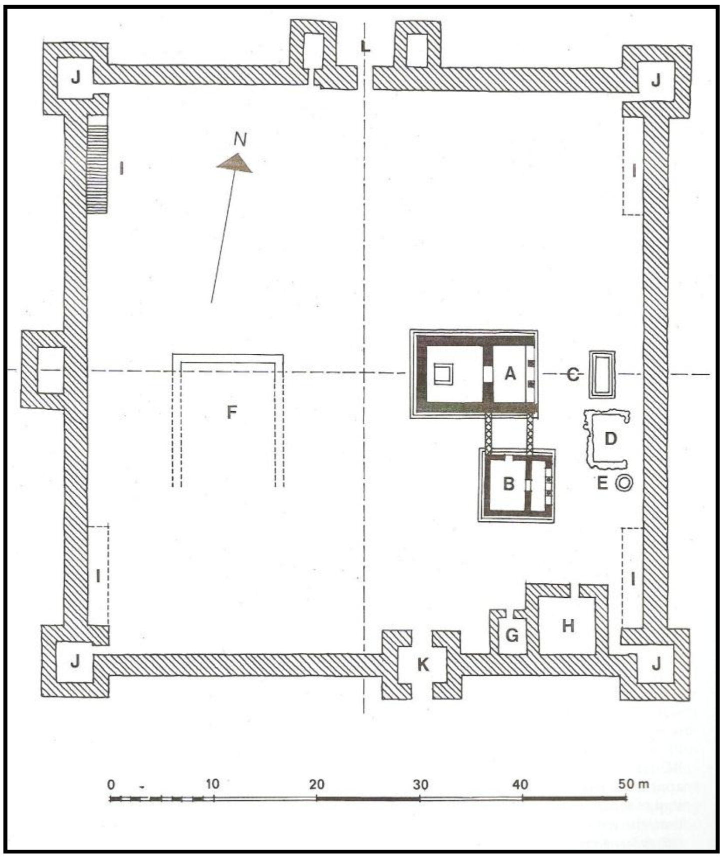


Figure 6.35. Showing F5 plan after the Danish excavations (Jeppesen 1989, 74).

Temple A

This temple is located almost in the fort centre. It is oriented from the east to the west. It is styled like a Greek temple but much smaller. It is about 7.5m wide and 11.5m long. The entrance of the temple has two columns and this entrance leads via a passage to another entrance then to a cella. Its area is about 5m². There are two columns on the entrance, which have Hellenic and Oriental (Achaemenid Ionic) decorations (Jeppesen 1989, 27-37). The leaf decoration on the base was also known in the sites at Susa. Jeppesen (1989) noted that the upper base stone was different to the bottom stone, and she suggested that the bases of the two columns were taken from the ruins of Achaemenian site on the island. Approximately 5m in front of the building, to the east, rectangular structures were found. They were about of 4.5m high and 2.28m wide. They appear to be the altar of the temple (Potts 2003b, 895-6).

Temple B

The structures of this temple were found about 3m south of temple A. It has a square plan that is 7.15m to 7.30m wide and length. About 5m away from temple A, to the southeast, was discovered the possible altar stone for temple B. This stone is circular and about 1.6m in diameter (Potts 2003b, 898-9).

F5 architecture

The defensive walls are between 2-7m thick. They were built of brick above a base of stones set in mud. They could be climbed from the inside. At each of the two towers located in the northwest and southeast, there were remains suggesting that there were ladders. On the south side of the fort facing the beach, there was a separate tower with a gate leading into the fort. In the middle of the north side of the fort and facing the interior area of the island, a gate was discovered. This gate was flanked by two small towers (Jeppesen 1989, 72-5). The western side of the fort has an external tower.

Perhaps there was a similar tower on the eastern side, but if so it has since disappeared. Within the southern wall, to the right of the main gate, two rooms were found, one larger than the other. The north gate was probably the way out in an emergency. In the eastern part of the fort, where there is an area about 55m², there are two temples with altars. Temple A and Temple B. Temple A is larger than Temple B (Jeppesen 1989, 72-5).

Temple B is slightly offset to the east from Temple A. This was perhaps to build a third building between Temple A and the southern gate, or to retainspace by the gate. The altar in Temple A was 2m away from the defensive wall, while the Temple B altar was about 1m away. The stratigraphic sequences suggests that Temple B was built a number of years after the construction of Temple A. The base level of Temple B was found to be approximately 10cm above the Temple A base level (Jeppesen 1989, 73).

F5 Finds

Eastern Group of figurines:

This group consists of several figurines, such as naked females, a seated male, horsemen, animals such as horses, and models of boats.

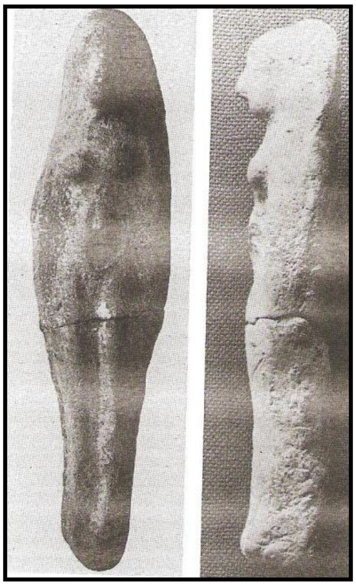


Figure 6.36. Nude female figurine from F5 (Mathiesen 1982, 18).

(a) *Figurine of naked females*

Found in the fort were about 24 small statues of naked females (see Figure 6.36). All were in a poor condition. Most of the arms were not intact; only one had her arms on her breast. It is about 12.4cm high. These two types of figurine prevailed in Seleucia Tigris throughout the Hellenistic period. In Babylon it appears that the naked female figurine with her arms on both sides was the most common type. Moreover, it was also common in Susa during the Parthian period (247BC - AD224; see Mathiesen 1982, 18).

(b) *Horsemen and horses*

This group forms the second largest number of fired clay statues found in the fort, numbering 22. Many of them are small broken fragments, which impedes easy reconstruction. This group was divided into five types: the first variant had all of the riders and horses in good condition. Variants 2, 3 and 4 had only the riders in good condition. Variant 5 consisted of the head and neck of the horses. I will choose variant 1 as an example to discuss in detail as it provides the best preservation (Mathiesen 1982, 20).

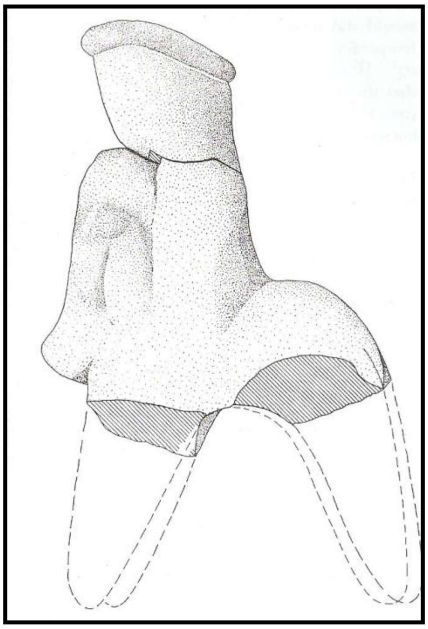


Figure 6.37. Showing variant 1 of a rider (Mathiesen 1982, 22; not to scale).

Variant 1

The rider was seated near the neck of the horse (see Figure 6.37). Its bodily features were not clear as there were no legs or arms. It is about 8.6cm high and 5.8 long. It appears to wear what might be described as a 'Macedonian' flat hat. The horse's head was tilted down. The tail was made from a block of triangular clay. Interestingly, one example presents a rider on a horse with two heads – anatomical representation was maybe not important here. Similar figurine forms have been found in Susa and Masjid-i-Sulaiman in Iran (Mathiesen 1982, 22).

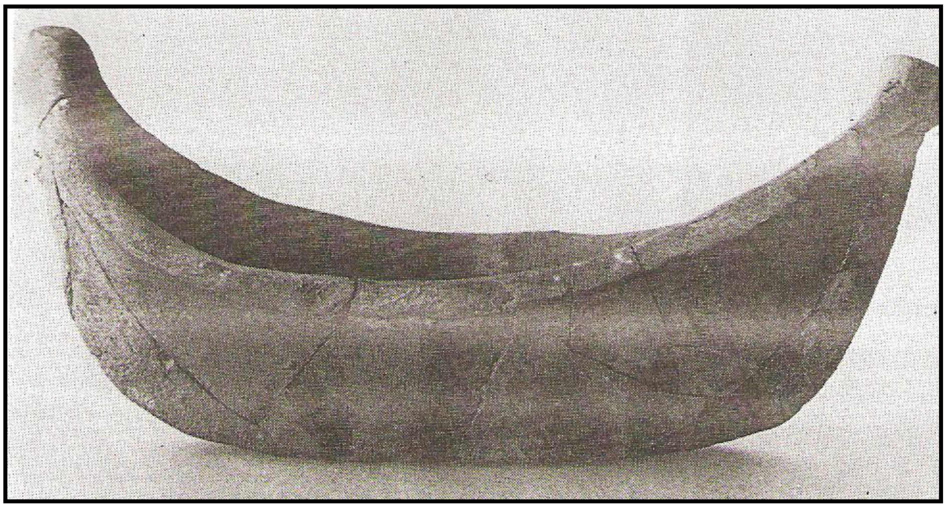


Figure 6.38. Example of one of the model boats found at F5 (Mathiesen 1982, 26).

(c) *Models of boats*

Two types of boat have been found at the Hellenistic fort. The first one is about 18.7cm long, 8.3cm wide and 8.4cm high, while the other one is about 10cm high. The first type was simple, where the prow and stern of the boat share approximately the same height. It also has a raised band showing the gunwale. Both prow and stern have hawse-holes. The second type is similar to the first one, but it has partitions from inside, and has paddles in the gunwale. All the pieces of this type were broken. Both boat types have rowlocks, suggesting that they emulate rowing boats. There are traces of bitumen in some boat gunwales. Perhaps they used the bitumen for repairing them (see previous discussion in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5). On the other hand this may indicate that bitumen trading existed on Failaka Island during that period (Mathiesen 1982, 25; see Figure 6.38). Some have suggested that the boats were used as symbolic receptacles for offerings to gods or magical practices (e.g. McCowan 1967, 95), while others suggest that they were children’s toys (e.g. Ingen 1939, 28).

There is, however, nothing to suggest that boat objects were used to support deities or magical beliefs; equally, adults may have interacted with the boats as much as children (see also discussions in Chapter 3).

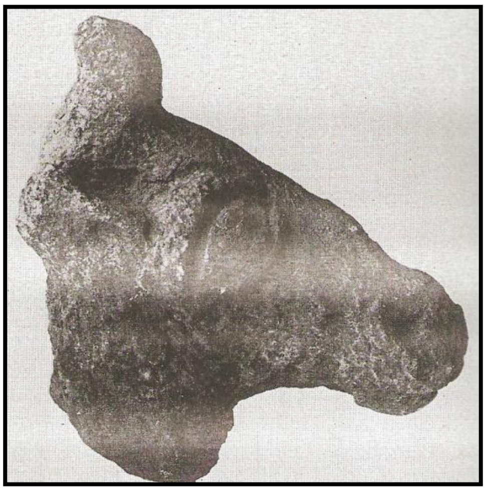


Figure 6.39. Showing horse head found at F5 – approximately 9.4cm high (Mathiesen 1982, 29).

(d) *Animal and birds Figurine*

There were many statues that represented parts of animal and birds bodies, such as oxen horns, horse (see Figure 6.39), and a bird's body. Similar fired clay oxen horns were found in Susa and in Seleucia Tigris. Some of these in Seleucia Tigris had holes made in them, possibly for suspension. A bird body with bitumen in its neck was also found, which may indicate repair. Also found were bird statues similar to the Failaka bird in Uruk, dating to the Parthian period (247BC - AD224; see Mathiesen 1982, 28). Birds may have represented differing perspectives on the world. For instance, the 'harmless' birds, such as the duck and the dove were indications of the love goddess in the Levant while the 'harmful' birds, such as eagles were sign of Zeus and the warrior gods. Moreover, in Anatolia, augury and bird sacrifice were common in the Hittite period (1750 – 1180BC), but there is no archaeological, literary or epigraphic evidence of similar practice during the first millennium BC in the Gulf (Daems 2004, 235).



Figure 6.40. Showing a man seated on a throne (Mathiesen 1982, 31).

(e) *Figurine of seated males*

Several figurines of seated males were found in the Hellenistic fort. For example, fig. 6.40 illustrates a man on a throne with his legs crossed, with his right arm on his upper body and his left hand on his thigh. The man is wearing trousers and a shirt with sleeves that reach the knee, and he has a belt. On the right thigh of the statue, there is a cloak wrapped around his lower body and thighs. The man also wears earrings and a crown with a band around its bottom edge. The man's hair seems parted and he has a very long, sharp beard. The moustache looks like a handlebar variety. The back of the throne consists of two vertical boards linked to a horizontal board. It is noted that near the right thigh part of the seat is left intact. The missing parts of the statue were: the right arm and right foot, fingers of the left hand, most of the upper part of the crown, the top of the throne and most of the seat. The statue was made of brown clay containing coarse grains of sand, and there was white and red colouring on the cloak, shirt, foot, hand, face and the upper part of the throne. There was blue colouring on the beard, hair and trousers. The crown and earrings have yellow colouring. The figurine is about 25cm high and its face is about 53cm in length

and its throne is about 17cm wide. This statue may have belonged to the time of the Parthian king Mithridates II (123 - 88BC), because there is a Parthian coin with a picture similar to this statue (Mathiesen 1982, 30-6). This figurine may have formed a link between worshippers and gods. For example, in ancient Egypt there were several seated men figurines, such as block figurine, which were found in ritual places especially the forecourts of temples and precincts. These figurines/statues functioned as doorkeepers or as mediators (Schulz 2011, 6), and this example may have acted in a similar manner.

Greek Figurine

Many Greek statues were found at F5, such as male heads (which are often interpreted as being Hercules, Alexander the Great or Nike), female heads, fish, goatman (half man half goat – like a satyr) (Mathiesen 1982, 39). I will discuss some examples which have significant features.

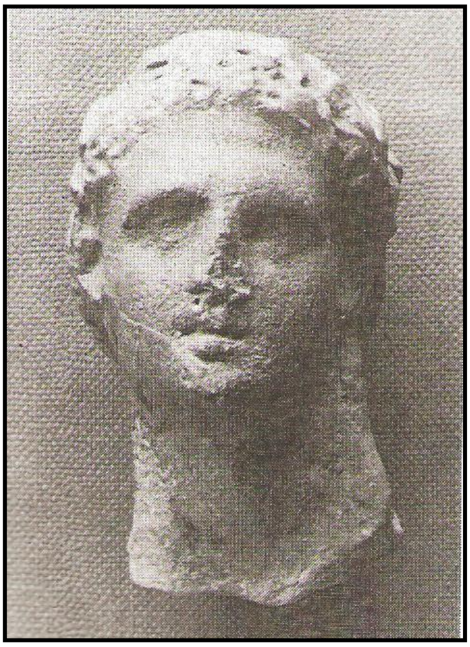


Figure 6.41. Showing a male head found at F5 (Mathiesen 1982, 39).

(a) *Human heads*

Male head

This statue has a high forehead and a prominent brow. The right eye is higher than the left. Part of the nose is broken. It has a small mouth and parted lips. The chin is not clear and it has a strong long neck. It also has sketched hair that is wrapped from the back. The man wears a wreath of leaves that is possibly laurel or olive leaf (see Figure 6.41). The statue is made of soft brown clay. It is about 7.7cm high, and its face length is about 36cm and 36cm wide. This statue possibly depicts a youthful un-bearded Hercules because there were similar statues were found in Tarsus and Delos that are known to be of Hercules, and on Tyrian coins (Mathiesen 1982, 37).



Figure.6.42. Showing a female head with Kalathos found at F5 (Mathiesen 1982, 41).

Female heads

This figurine of female head has a high kalathos, in the form of bowl, on her head. Two female heads were found at F5 with a high Kalathos (see Figurine 6.42). On the top of the Kalathos was a decoration of a triangular tree leaf. On both sides of the tree leaf there were similar decorations. The hair style is parted on the forehead. There are ringlets on each side of the head and along the neck. Also there are spiral tufts. The eyes were slightly slanted and the nose was a quite small and the mouth closed. Both of statues have a thick neck. Perhaps these statues were used as incense burners. Similar statues were found in Daura, Mirmeki and Ai-Khanoum (Mathiesen 1982, 41-6).

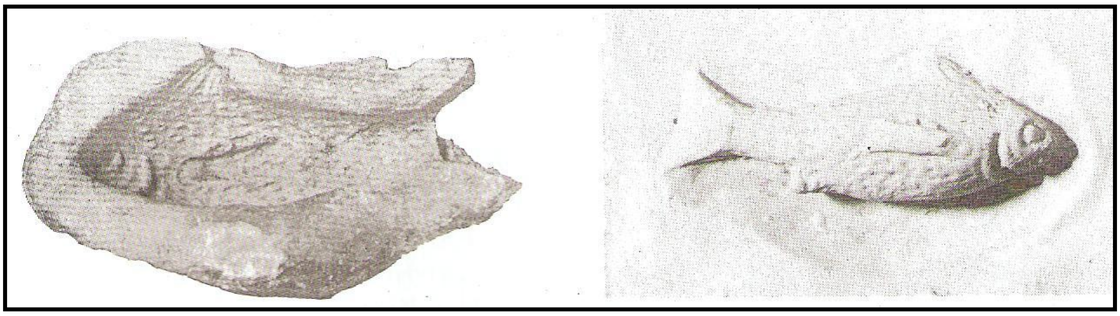


Figure.6.43. Showing fish moulds found at F5 (Mathiesen 1982, 62).

(b) *Fish moulds*

Moulds that were used for making fish statues were discovered at F5. One was about 3.4cm high and 7.1cm long. It is possible that the fish statues were offered as a gift to the gods. Also fish were sacred to Atargatis (Mermaid goddess in northern Syria). Moreover, fish were provided as votive offerings in the Greek region (Mathiesen 1982, 61-2; see Figure 6.43). These fish may indicate that fishing formed an important part of life – such as a food source. As of yet there has, however, been no isotope analysis to support this assertion.

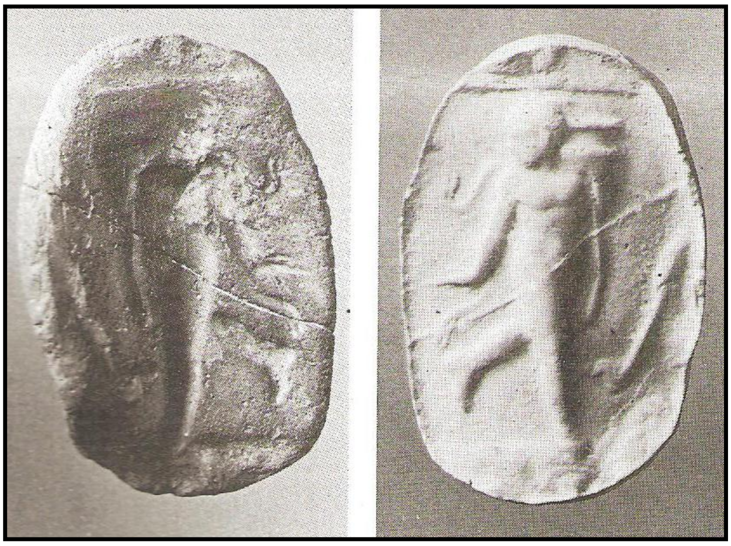


Figure 6.44. Showing mould found at F5 (Mathiesen 1982, 65).

(c) *Dancing male or the goat deity*

A completely preserved mould was discovered that depicts a male figurine walking or dancing (see Figure 6.44). It is about 68cm high and 47cm wide. It shows his moustache, and he wears on his head whiskers and horns. His shoulders are covered by animal leather with a tail on the left side. Under the picture of the figure were curved strips. The statues were made of yellow clay. Similar moulds were found in Begram in Afghanistan (Mathiesen 1982, 65). This piece is often interpreted as a 'goat-man' due to the combinations of whiskers and horns with a human body (e.g. Mathiesen 1982). After looking at this representation, there are more human aspects than goat, and it is more likely to be a man moving – he might even be dancing with a head-dress on.

As we have seen several places have figurines, similar to those found in Failaka, such as Mesopotamia, Susa, Masjid-i-Sulaiman in Iran, Daura, Mirmeki, Ai-Khanoum, Begram, Uruk. This might indicate that trade existed between the cities in Failaka Island and places in the northern or the southern Arabian Gulf (see Chapter

3). Commercial links and administrative links may have extended as far as the Mediterranean.

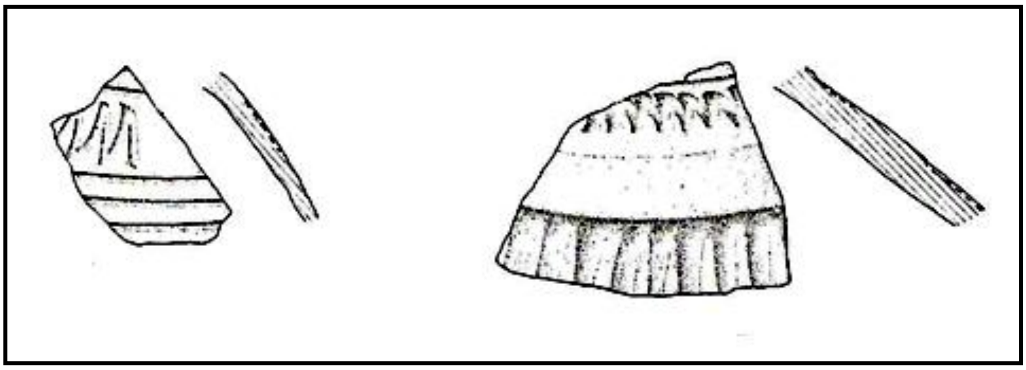


Figure 6.45. Showing glazed ware at F5 (Hannestad 1983, 13 – not to scale).

Pottery from F5

(a) *Glazed Ware*

Glazed pottery was common in the F4 and F5 sites (see Figure 6.45). Much of this type was found at all levels in F5. It is characterised by white, yellow, turquoise and pale green to green colours. The glaze usually covers the ware completely; the lower body and foot are often unglazed. There are bands of incised lines and zigzag lines on the shoulder of closed shapes. This type of pottery was imported from Mesopotamia and Susa (Hannestad 1983, 13-5).

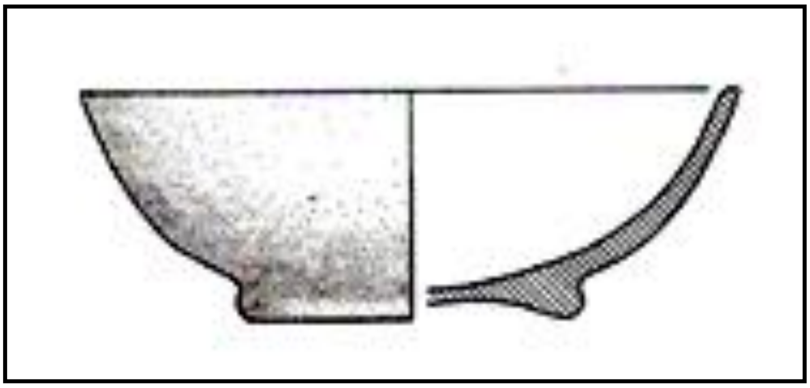


Figure 6.46. Bowl with curved walls at F5 (Hannestad 1983, 52).

Several kinds of bowl were found at F5. For example there are: bowls with curved walls, bowls with an angular profile and out-turned rims, bowls with flaring and offset lips, bowls with flaring sides and thickened rims, bowls with incurving rims and rounded bowls (see Figure 6.46). The bowl illustrated in fig. 6.46 is about 4.7cm high with a diameter of 13.4cm. All bowls are characterised by convex curve walls from base to rim. The most similar pottery type to these bowls is known as Greek black – these are glazed bowls of the late Hellenistic period (Hannestad 1983, 17).

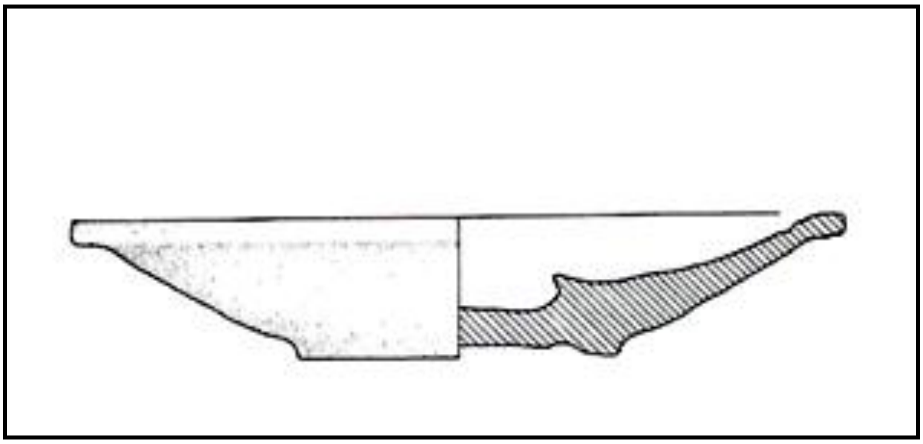


Figure 6.47. Showing plates with an offset rim at F5 (Hannestad 1983, 72).

(b) *Plates*

Several plates were found at F5, such as fish plates, plates with a thickened interior rim and plates with an offset rim. Plates with an offset rim were common at this site but complete examples were very rare. They have been found in both the upper and lower levels but they appear more in the upper level. There were three complete examples; one has a tall ring foot with no central depression in the floor (see Figure 6.47). It is about 2.9cm high with a diameter of 15.8cm. The other two have a concave bottom with a depression in the floor. This form may derive from a Greek Hellenistic plate type. For example, they are similar to plates from the Agora in Athens. Moreover, there are similar examples from Daura in Mesopotamia (Hannestad 1983, 28-34). This might indicate that some local potters were copying foreign styles because they were more significant (having a different status). It may have been 'cheaper' to copy foreign styles in local clay, than to import them.

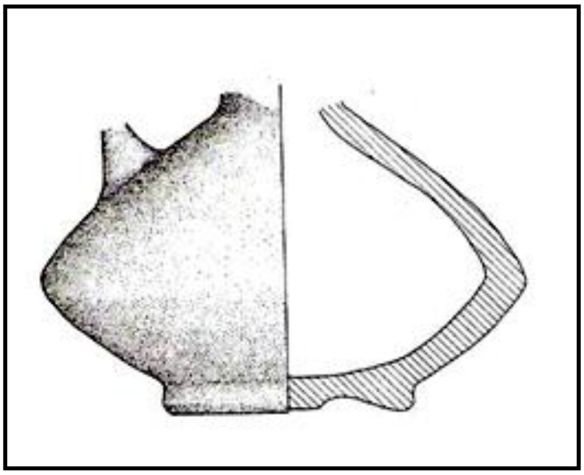


Figure 6.48. Showing small jug found in F5 (Hannestad 1983, 85 - not to scale).

(c) *Closed shaped objects*

There were a lot of closed *shaped objects* found at F5, such as amphorae, bottles, pilgrim flasks, guttus type of askos, a small jugs, thymiaterion, cosmetic pots and miscellaneous forms (see Figure 6.48). For example, a small jug was found. It has a vertical handle and both the upper handle and neck were missing. Parallel jugs are common in Greek pottery forms but the closed jugs of Failaka Island are a black glazed pottery type that is also found in Olynthus in Macedonia (Hannestad 1983, 35-44).

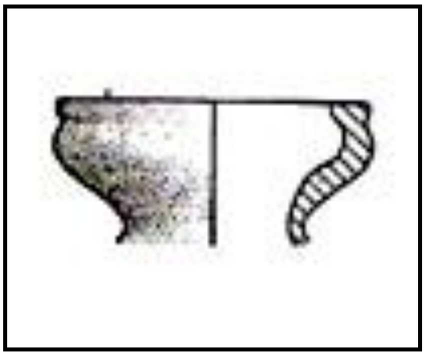


Figure 6.49. Showing some examples of eggshell ware at F5 (Hannestad 1983, 90 – not to scale).

(d) *Eggshell ware*

Eggshell ware is usually fine or delicate, and was found in both the lower and upper levels at F5. The clay comprises several colours, such as grey, greenish–grey, light brown and pale yellow. The lower part of the vessels is decorated with lines. Tall beaker forms are the most common shape (see Figure 6.49). They have flaring walls, a gentle inward curve at the base and a rounded bottomed bowl. Another common form is a bowl with flaring sides and an offset lip. The form of eggshell ware originated in Assyrian 'Palace ware' dated to the 8th and 7th century BC. Similar eggshell ware has been found in several other regions, such as similar tall beakers at Sha'ur Palace in Susa. In addition, parallel rounded bottom bowls were found in central and southern Mesopotamia at Uruk, Ur, Seleucia and Nippur (Hannestad 1983, 45-7). At the moment, the provenance of the clay for the Failaka examples is unknown.

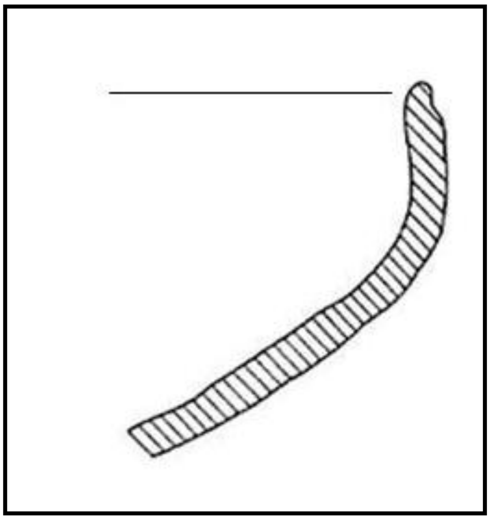


Figure 6.50. Showing Arabian red-and black- washed ware at F5 (Hannestad 1983, 91- not to scale).

(e) *Arabian red and black washed ware*

Only one complete vessel in this type was found at F5. This type was most common in the lower levels. The clay of red-washed ware contains quantities of mica and chalk grit and is fired reddish yellow and brown, while the clay of black-washed has a grey colour (see Figure 6.50). The red and black washed are common on Arabian east coast sites, such as Thaj, ‘Ain Jawan, Tarut and Bahrain. It is possible that the lack of the Arabian red or black washed at F5 demonstrates that this type was imported (Hannestad 1983, 49-50). As a result of current publications, it is difficult to say if the ware was restricted in production to a single location and exported along the coast (including Bahrain) (Hannestad 1983, 50).

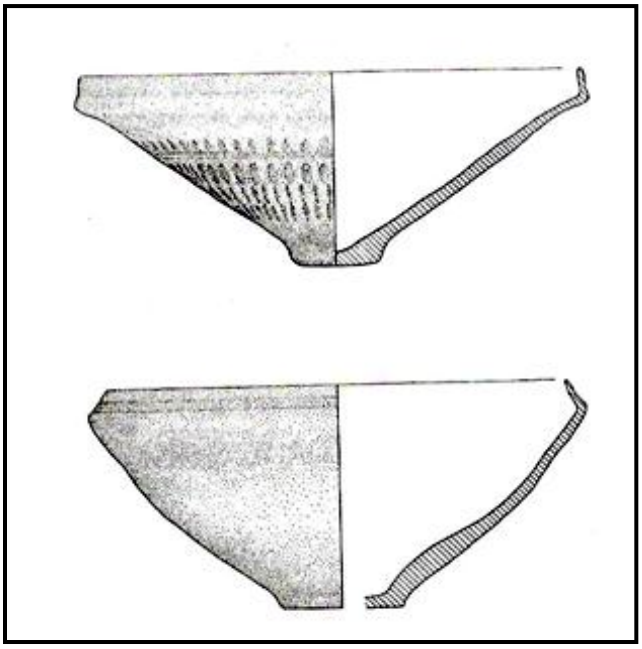


Figure 6.51. Showing Nabataean ware at F5 (Hannestad 1983, 93 – not to scale).

(f) *Nabataean ware*

There were very thin sherds of bowls found at F5 (see Figure 6.51). They are characterised by a flat base with a small diameter, flaring sides and a sharply offset lip that is 1cm high. They are light red in colour and have lots of impurities. The upper part and the rim of the bowl often has a white slip. All repaired bowls have a diameter 16-17cm. The designs and forms of this type illustrate Nabataean origin, which dates to after 100BC. There are similar bowls found in ‘Ain Jawan and Thaj, dating to the Hellenistic period. This type was imported from the Nabataean Kingdom (now south Jordan) via caravan trade routes from Taima to the Arabian Gulf and south Arabia, and from a northern route via the Jawf oasis to the Eastern Peninsula (Hannestad 1983, 50-1).

(g) *Greek black-glazed ware*

Five sherds of this type were discovered at F5. They seem to have Attic origins (Attic or Attica is the historical region of Greece including Athens). Three were found in the lowest layers. The sherds consist of two plate rims with a rolled rim, a ring foot and two fragments of plate body. The plate with a rolled rim may have been produced in Athens before the devastation of Olynthus in 340BC, and continued into the Hellenistic period (Hannestad 1983, 53).

The concave form on the exterior under the rim is a feature of the 4th century BC. Roroff (1976) dated two rim sherds to the first half of the 3rd century BC. Her date relies on the location of the groove under the rim from outside. The position of the rolled rim to the plate bottom dates to 285BC and the foot may date to the 4th or first half of the 3rd century BC. The Attic plate with rim was found in some areas located east of the Mediterranean Sea, such as Tarsus, Hama, Antioch and Samaria. Moreover, it was found in Mesopotamia at Daura and in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula at Thaj (Hannestad 1983, 53).

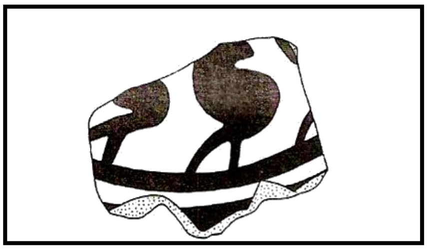


Figure.6.52. Showing sherd of Festoon ware found at F5 (Hannestad 1983, 94 - not to scale).

(h) *Festoon ware*

This name refers to pottery discovered in parts of western and central Iran in the Achaemenian and pre-Achaemenian periods. This type is characterised by the numerous assemblies of small loops in its decoration (see Figure 6.52). Sherds of this type were found scattered at F5. All of them were found in the upper layers. Similar

pottery was found at Susa and Pasargade. The Pasargade pottery, which belongs to the end of the settlement III, date to 180BC, but Susa pottery date to the end of the ancient Parthian period (250 - 150BC; see Hannestad 1983, 55). It is likely that this pottery style was imported to the island from Susa and Pasargade.

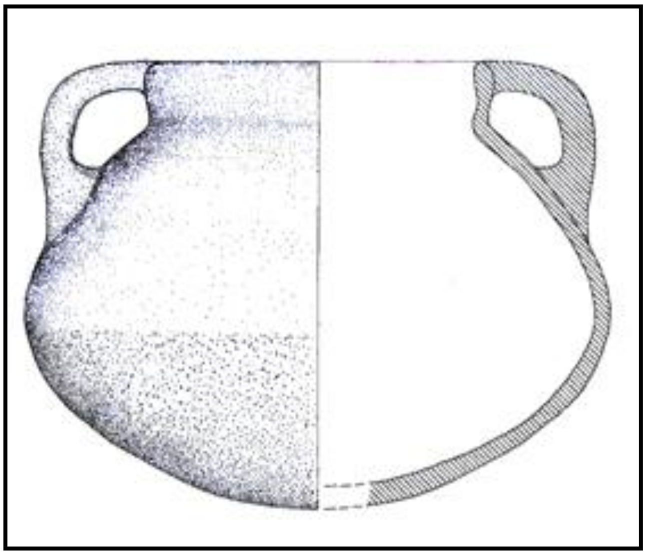


Figure.6.53. Showing cooking ware at F5 (Hannestad 1983, 110; not to scale).

(i) *Cooking ware*

Many examples of coarse gritty clay pottery was found at F5. The ware may have been used for cooking (see Figure 6.53). It is about 18.25 high with a diameter of 13cm. The clay was tempered with grit in order to endure the fire; most of them were blackened on the outside parts. This may confirm that they were used for cooking. The clay is made up of several colours, such as greyish, which was most common and reddish brown. There were two forms of this type: deep pot with two grips from rim to shoulder and shallower pot with a sharper in-turning of the body bottom and two horizotional handles on the shoulder. The handles can be reached beneath the rim. Similar forms were found in the eastern Mediterranean dating to the Hellenistic period, for example in Athens and Tarsus. Moreover, there were similar cooking pots at Tell Halaf in Mesopotamia and Pasargade in Iran (Hannestad 1983, 63-4).

To date, these pots on Failika provide us with the most copious evidence for Greek influence in cooking ware the Near east (Hannestad 1983, 64).

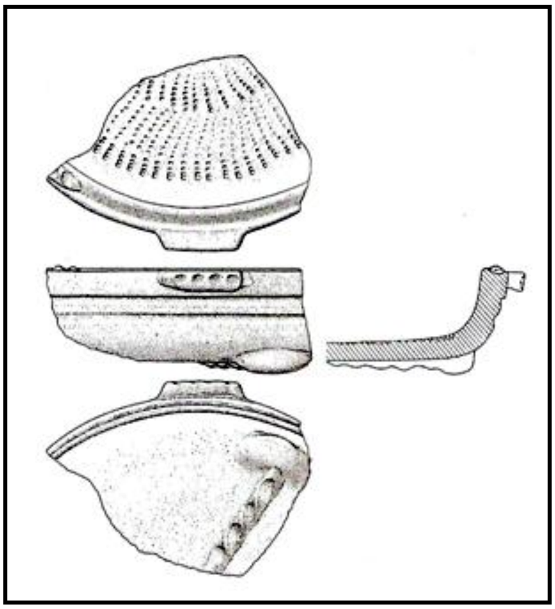


Figure 6.54. Showing some mortar sherds at F5 (Hannestad 1983, 114; not to scale).

(j) *Mortars*

A dozen fragments from mortars were found at F5. They were found in all the levels but they were most common in the upper level. They are made from a coarse clay and do not contain grit temper (see Figure 6.54). The mortar parts vary in colour from greyish-brown to reddish-brown. All of them have decorations with impressions. The bases in many of the mortars are worn thin; this may indicate that they were used for constant or repeated grinding. Their diameters vary between 25cm and 40cm. Similar examples were found in Mesopotamia at Seleucia Tigris, Uruk, at Susa and Chaour in Iran (Hannestad 1983, 67). At the moment, it is impossible to say whether they present a local or imported form.

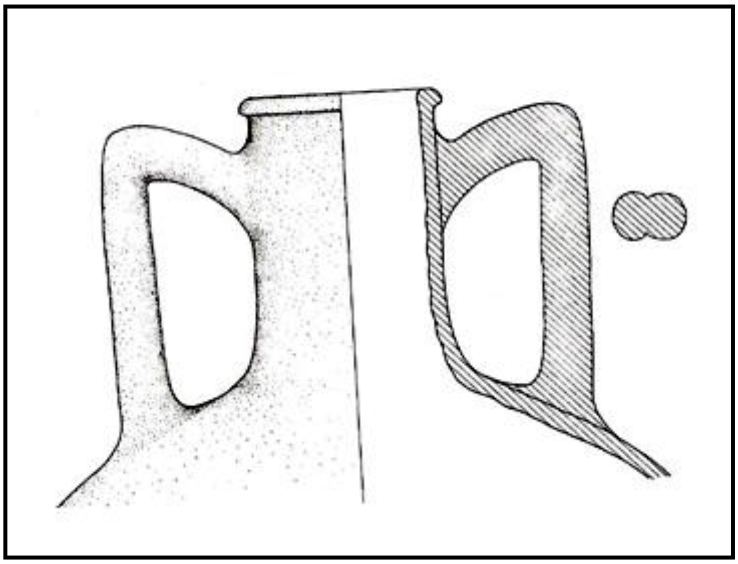


Figure 6.55. Showing Greek wine amphorae at F5 (Hannestad 1983, 117 - not to scale).

(k) *Greek wine amphorae*

Fragments of Greek wine amphorae were found scattered during the excavation (see Figure 6.55). Several have stamp impressions bearing makers names, such as Eponym Mytion, Timo, Menekrates and Eponym Xenophantos. Similar amphorae have been found in Mesopotamia at Tell Halaf, Uruk, Seleucia, at Susa in Iran and moreover, in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula at Thaj and Mleiha (Hannestad 1983, 71-2). It is possible that these fragments were imported from Cyprus (Hannestad 1983, 72).

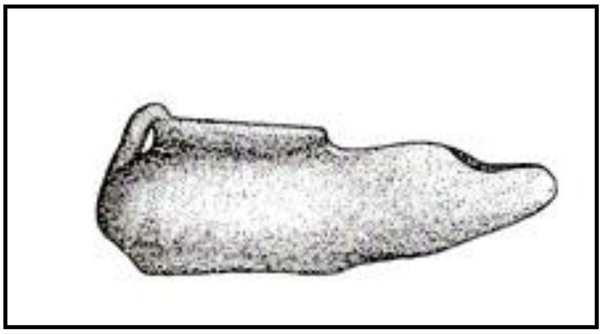


Figure 6.56. Showing lamp at F5 (Hannestad 1983, 118 - not to scale).

(l) *Lamps*

Two types of lamp were found at F5. The first was a lamp with a high rim and a handle rim (see Figure 6.56). The second was a lamp with a plainer ring-shaped rim without a handle. Both these types were found in the upper and lower levels. Similar lamps have been found in Mesopotamia at Uruk dating to the Seleucid and Parthian periods (Hannestad 1983, 73-4). It is likely that the lamps were imported from northern Mesopotamia or Seleucia (Hannestad 1983, 74).

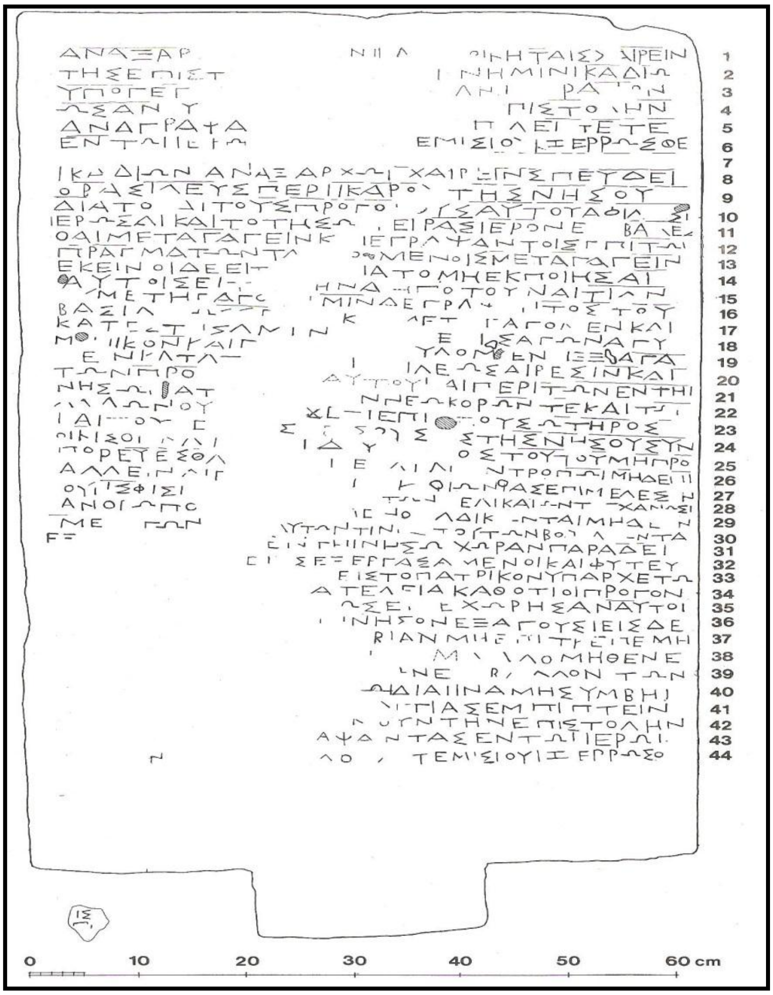


Figure 6.57. Showing the Ikaros inscription at F5 (Jeppesen 1989, 90).

Greek inscriptions

Two Greek inscriptions have been found to date, the Soteles text and the Ikaros inscription. There are conflicting stories regarding the discovery of the Soteles text. Some suggest that it was found by a gardener when he was cultivating his land in 1937 (Potts 2003b, 932; Dickson 1971, 312; Salles 1984, 133). Others suggest that it was found in the wall of a small building, which was located in the northern of the Failaka Island, when it was torn down (Potts 2003b, 933). Both stories confirm that the provenance and context for this object are unfortunately unknown.

The inscription on this stone termed the Soteles text suggests that it was from Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984, 135). The inscription mentions Soteles the Athenian and the soldiers to the Soter Poseidon. Soter or Soteria means the saviour, which is one of Artemis's characteristics (Roueché and Sherwin-White 1985, 5). Moreover, Roueché and Sherwin-White (1985) noted that this inscription was probably an expression of thanks to Poseidon, the god of the sea, after he had saved whoever erected it, from sea perils. The second inscription (Ikaros) was found during the Danish excavations between temple A and B; it was a large inscription stele (Jeppesen 1989, 35; see Figure 6.57). It has 44 lines depicting some possible procedures at Failaka Island (see further discussion below).

Ceramics that are very similar to Failaka figurine are found in nearby regions, such as Mesopotamia at Seleucia Tigris, Uruk, Tell Halaf, Susa, Chaour in Iran and in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula at Thaj and Mleiha. They are also found further afield in northern Arabia in Nabataea (Jordan today) and around the eastern Mediterranean in places, such as Tarsus, Antioch, Hama, and Samaria. This demonstrates that Failaka Island has relationships with all these places and illustrates that Failaka Island was not isolated at that time. These cities, located in different areas were controlled by the Seleucid Empire. The Seleucid rulers maintained control of the trade routes from India, Arabian Gulf reaching to north Syria. Trade flourished and reached its peak during the reigns of Antiochus III the Great (223 -187BC) and Seleucus IV (187 – 175BC; Potts 2003b, 925).

6.3 **Discussion**

Musnad found in al-Khairan and the Warā Mountains in southern Kuwait may indicate trade routes from the mainland that linked the northern and southern parts of the Arabian Peninsula. Musnad writing was also found in the Failaka and Akkaz islands (al-Duweesh 2010b, 11-2).

Tell al-Khazna was a proto-Hellenistic site and was re-used during the Hellenistic period. There was not any evidence for Hellenistic material at level 4, while the materials are discovered by level 3. The island was inhabited before the Greek arrival (see Chapter 2 for a brief history of Failaka Island).

It was observed that there was lack of female figurines at Tell al-Khazna, while in contrast many were found in the Hellenistic sites at Failaka Island. The site also did not have Greek statues with themes that were common in Mesopotamia, such as women lying on a couch, musician-women and a goddess with a child. Most of the figurines at this site were of nude female eastern goddesses. In this site there were male figurines who held something; they were common during the 1st millennium BC in Mesopotamia in several cities, such as Nippur and Seleucia Tigris (Mathiesen 1982, 74-5; Salles 1984, 144-9; Potts 2003b, 912-3).

Furthermore, most of the camel figurines found at Tell al-Khazna were similar to the Uruk-Warka sties dated to the first millennium BC. Moreover, the brown/red clay and buff clay were unusual to Failaka Island (Salles 1984, 167-8). The brown/red clay was mixed with soft sand and grits and it was common in Persian rider figurines, while the buff clay was common in nude females. Neither was found in the Hellenistic sites at Failaka Island. This may indicate that these types of clay were imported and date to the proto-Hellenistic period. In addition, there are few similarities present between the finds from Tell al-Khazna and Seleucia Tigris during

the Hellenistic period. The eastern figurine was found at level 4, while the Hellenistic figurine was found at level 3. This demonstrates that this site dates to the proto-Hellenistic period. Moreover, most of the figurine deities that were found in Tell al-Khazna were male and there was lack of Greek goddesses. Mathiesen (1982) suggested that this may demonstrate that this site dates to the proto-Hellenistic period, while Potts (2003b) noted that Tell al-Khazna figurines date to the Achaemenian period and to the beginning of the Hellenistic period.

Additionally, the pottery that was found in Tell al-Khazna belonged to the Achaemenid period (500 - 400BC). There were some differences between proto-Hellenistic and Hellenistic pottery. Proto-Hellenistic pottery was well fired, well ground, with a fine gravel temper and had orange clay. Also, the glaze had a green colour that decayed to a powdery, whitish layer. Hellenistic pottery was sandy and unfired with a yellowish colour (Salles 1984, 210). In terms of local pottery versus non-local, there seems to be no discernable difference in terms of production and provenance of clay. The styles adopted to mould and shape the clay were, however, heavily influenced by non-local traditions, such as Mesopotamian common ware and glazed ware. This may reflect the administrative infrastructure or influence of proto-Hellenistic and Hellenistic worlds. For example, compared with Ubaid pottery movements (see Chapter 3), what we might be seeing now is an increased globalisation of either skills or skilled people, or indeed both in tandem.

Tell al-Khazna has various coins from several regions, such as Greece, Anatolia, Phoenicia, Syria, Babylonia, Khuzistan and Media (in Iran). It is clear that these coins accumulated in different times. The coin hoard was buried about 70 years before the second coin hoard that the Danish team found in F5. It may have been buried in 285BC as the site dates to the Achaemenid period. Thus, this site may have

been settled by Greeks before the arrival of Alexander and the community of the island may have had Greek influences before the construction of the fortress and associated temples (Salles 1984, 291-6; Potts 2003b, 924).

This site did not belong to Artemis but maybe was a religious site because there were lots of figurines found that that might have been used as offerings. Greeks when they arrived found the island's inhabitants sacrificing goats in the temple (see Chapter 2). Perhaps the temple depicted was Tell al-Khazna (al-Wohaibi 2011 pers. comm). On the other hand most of the figurines found at Tell al-Khazna appeared to be male, with a lack of noticeable figurines that could be seen as Greek goddesses (Mathiesen 1982, 74-5).

We do not know how or when F5 was built, but through analysis of the materials found, we can suggest some possibilities. Hanstad (1983) classified the pottery found at the fortress into two styles. One was a Hellenistic type and the second was an eastern type. Hanstad (1983) classified the pottery found in the upper levels with those found in lower levels. Thus she identified two main construction phases. This could be applied to phase I and phase II. From the comparison of pottery and other areas, she concluded that the first construction of the fort was between the middle of the 3rd century BC and the latter of the 2nd century BC. The second construction phase was between the later parts of the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD (Potts 2003b, 907).

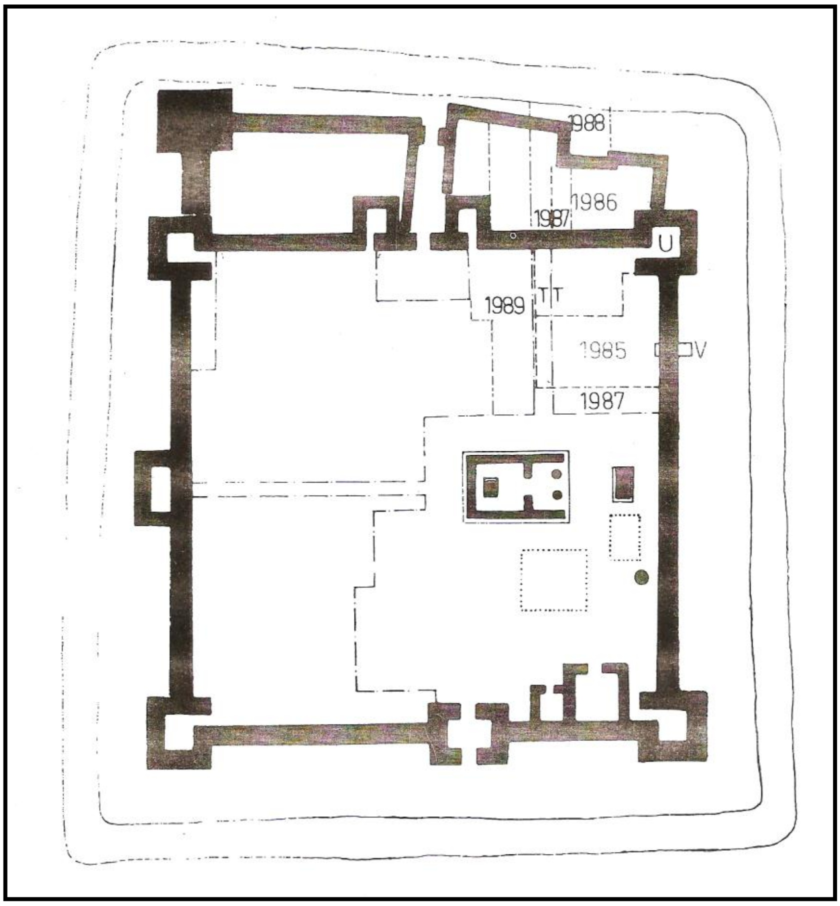


Figure 6.58. Schematic plan of F5 after French excavations (Gachet and Salles1984, 298 – not to scale)

The architecture of the fortress featured additional modifications over time. It appears that the simpler houses inside the fortress were built first - but there is not a specific date for them. There were also several architectural changes made to the fortress wall, such as closing the southern entrance, destroying much of the northern wall and its extension with an opened door. A protective stone and mud brick wall was also added to most of the towers, reaching half way up them (Gachet and Salles 1984, 297-310; see Figure 6.58).

The temples were not spared from the alterations. A passage was opened, which has a stone wall, from the south wall of temple A to the north wall of temple B, possibly to facilitate movement between the two locations (Jeppesen 1989, 37). Perhaps all previous adjustments were made for security reasons as a result of

political change around 140BC (Potts 2003b, 902). For instance, Potts (2003b, 995) explains that when the Seleucid Empire started diminishing in power throughout the Arabian Gulf, the Parthians took control of the trade routes between the Arabian Gulf and India (Potts 2003b, 995). It is likely that during these transitions of power, that Failaka Island faced increased risk of raiding. The fortifications and additional security measures at the fortress possibly reflect this.

Constructing the fortress:

Phase I covers the building of the fortress, of temples A and B and several houses in the south side. Phase II incorporates the restoration the castle wall and strengthening of all the towers except the southwest corner tower where some houses were built. Phase III dates to Antiochos III (323 -180BC) where two coin hoards was found. At that time the fortress experienced some re-organisations, such as closing the entrances, extending the protective walls and moat. Phase IV witnesses the destruction of the northern wall of the fortress. Phase V develops occupation of the castle by the island's inhabitants with the creation of additional housing (Potts 2003b, 902).

F5 was possibly built on a pre-existing site. This is suggested by the earlier remains that were found. Salles (1984) stated that the well was underlying the mainsite of F5 on an alignment that was different (Salles 1984, 112; 128). Furthermore, Barbar pottery from the Dilmun was found at the site (see Chapter 5). Hannestad (1983) noted that there similar pottery was found in the City V at Qala'at al-Bahrain, which dates from 300BC to the first centuries of Christianity (see Chapter 5). Recently, the Kuwaiti/Greek archaeological teams found Dilmun seals at F5 (al-Saie 2008, 3). This may indicate that F5 was built on an earlier site maybe belonging to the late Dilmun that dates to City V (see Chapter 5) in Bahrain.

Hellenistic materials were found on some sites, such as Akkaz Island, Umm al-Namel Island (al-Wohaibi 1987, 81) and the *SRC* burial mound in Sabbiyah on the mainland. For example, a Hellenistic jar was found in *SRC* in 1999, dating to the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. It is similar to a jar that was found in the Hellenistic fortress on Failaka Island. This indicates that this burial mound may have been reused in the Hellenistic period (see Chapter 4). This raises the question: If indeed the Greeks lived in Kuwait, where did they bury their dead? At the moment, archaeology cannot answer this question due to a lack of evidence. Previously it was thought that there were no Hellenistic cemeteries – with just the possible 'burial' in SRC and a few burials on Bahrain being known (al-Wohaibi 1987, 81). It was suggested that maybe the dominant burial rites took the form of cremation with the remains being scattered, or that bodies were deposited in water (rivers and the sea), as is seen in Bronze Age Britain (Parker Pearson 1999; see further discussion below).

Although large-scale generational cemeteries have still not been found, new discoveries have been made. For instance, during the excavations conducted by the French mission in Failaka in 1984-1988, twelve skeletons were found in the eastern part of F6. This site dates to the Bronze Age and is located about 100m north of the Hellenistic fortress (Calvet and Pic 1984, 14; also see Chapter 5). They were all buried at the depth of 1-2m below ground, except one found buried inside a jar (see Figures 6.59 and 6.60). They were distributed as follows; two single graves, a double grave and common graves, which include seven people.

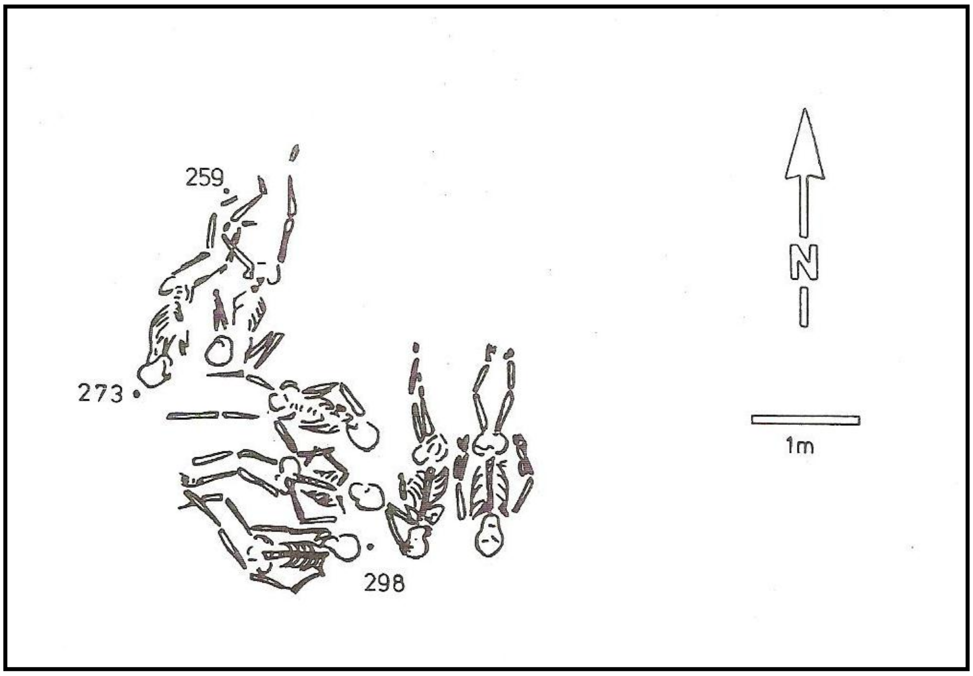


Figure 6.59. Showing a common grave type at F6 (Maat *et al*. 1988, 86).

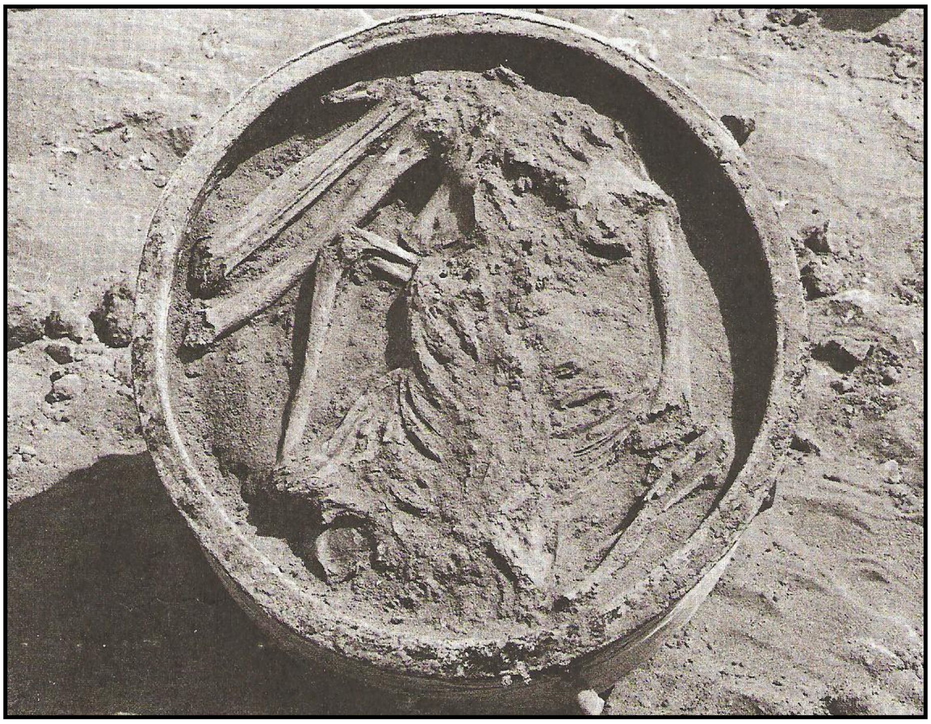


Figure 6.60. Photograph showing a burial jar at F6 (Calvet and Pic1984, 83).

In the two single graves one of the skeletons was found lying on his back and the other was found lying on his right side. The skeletons in the double grave were lying irregularly. The skeletons in the common grave were found lying in different ways and directions; there were no grave goods. The skeletons were affected by environmental erosion, such as soil and air humidity (Maat *et al.* 1988, 95).

The skeleton in the burial jar was hunched over and upside down. The results of a dental examination suggest that this skeleton belonged to man aged between 63-73 years old. This burial method was used in the 1st millennium BC in Mesopotamia, such as in Nippur and Larsa, and also during the Hellenistic period (Maat *et al.* 1988, 85-7; Calvet and Pic 1984, 18). Similar burial methods were found in the Arabian Gulf, such as in Bahrain (Maat *et al*. 1988, 93).

As for the other skeletons, which were found on the ground, after dental examinations and C14 (2130 ± 80 BP computer calibration dates around 320-75 cal. BC), they turned out to be of men and their ages were between 20-40 years old (Maat *et al.* 1988, 93, 98). It has been suggested that the men were soldiers as there was evidence for trauma on their skulls (Maat *et al.* 1988, 98). This may be true, but it should be noted that civilians can also experience trauma to the skull via accidents or occupational hazards.



Figure 6.61. Photograph showing skeleton found in southwestern tower of F5 (Kottaridi 2009, 5).

More recently, the excavations of the Kuwaiti and Hellenistic archaeological team in 2009 found a simple grave in building A in the southwestern tower of the Hellenistic fortress. The grave was built of rough stones and covered by layers of beach rock. The direction of the grave was north to south. The grave was damaged by earlier excavations. It contains a skeleton in very good condition (see Figure 6.61). The skeleton, perhaps of a young person, had lost all of its teeth. This may indicates that the person was ill, unlucky, or that dental issues were a concern for all. He was positioned slightly on his right side, facing southwest (Kottaridi 2009, 5). I believe that this grave was for a Muslim person because all of the Muslim graves in Kuwait are orientated north to south, with the right side facing the southwest, the direction of Mecca. There is no absolute date for this burial so far. Clearly there are still new

discoveries to be made. These discoveries will continue through the other periods as we will see that in next chapters.

That there is no exclusive Greek cemetery in Failaka Island might be due to a few reasons. The first is that the land of Kuwait, including Failaka Island, requires further excavations and investigations – meaning that they have not been found yet (see Chapter 3). The second reason is that the Greeks may have cremated their dead. For example, in Domat al-Jandal, which is located in the northern of Saudi Arabia, 3-5 parallel graves dating to the Hellenistic period were found. Most bones were charred, as the body was cremated with its goods (Hasihm 1996, 119). Perhaps cremation was the dominate burial rite at that time.

Ikaros inscriptions may give us some indications regarding the political, social, or economical systems on Ikaros Island (Failaka). The inscriptions suggest that the island was under the rule of the Seleucids, who took control of the Eastern Empire of Alexander the Great, which includes southern Anatolia, the Levant, Mesopotamia, the area known today as Turkmenstan, Pamir and part of Pakistan. This gives us an important idea about the history of Failaka in the Hellenistic period. The inscription mentioned Seleukos. Perhaps he was Seleukos II (246 - 226BC). Also it mentioned two other names: Anaxarchos and Ikadion. Anaxarchos was perhaps the ruler of Failaka while Iakadion was the superior satrap of the Erythraean Sea. Iakadion was well known and he was supported by Seleukos II in his war against his brother to become king (Rice 1998, 183).

There were also inscriptions, which indicate a relocation of the sanctuary of Soteira. Perhaps the sanctuary was out of the fortress, and when the fortress was built it was incorporated into it (Potts 2003b, 944). The inscription indicates that gymnastics occurred in the island and they related to offerings according to the Hellenistic traditions. It could be that events occurred here, such as consecrating Sotira or the king's birthday, but the inscription did not demonstrate that explicitly (Jeppesen 1989, 95-6) Also, there was an inscription that stated the people had the right to retain their rural property after they had settled in the city and should not be stripped of their right to keep their inherited property from agricultural areas. The inscription also exempted the islanders and those who were trading with the island from taxes. The inscription noted that nobody should commit violence or fraud in dealings (Jeppesen 1989, 98; Potts 2003b, 945).

As mentioned above, 129 figurines were found in the fortress during the Danish excavations (Potts 2003b, 912-5), while the French team found 280 figurines at Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984, 143). The figurines that the Danish found dated to phase I of the fortress construction while the Tell al-Khazna figurines dated to the Achaemenid period and to the beginning of the Hellenistic period (Potts 2003b, 912-5). The figurines may also give us some indications to the provenance of the pieces. The great similarity between the handmade equestrian figurines, which were found in Susa (in Iran), and the equestrian Variant I of Failaka indicates that the equestrians of Failaka were imported from Susa, which may have been a figurine production centre in the region. Also in Masjid-i-Sulaiman (in Iran) some equestrian figurine were found similar to the Variant I of Failaka Island. Perhaps this indicates that there was a commercial relationship between Susa, Masjdi-i-Sulaiman and Failaka Island. Also there was evidence supporting such a possibility with the similarities between moulds

of the naked women figurine, found in Susa, Masjid-i-Sulaiman and Failaka Island. Moreover, there are figurines from Babylon and Seleucia on Tigris which reflect the possible relationships between Mesopotamia and Failaka Island (Mathiesen 1982, 72). From the above it is clear that in this period Failaka had established trade relationships with cities along the northern Arabian Gulf, and in particular with Susa and Mesopotamia, such as Babylon and Seleucia Tigris (Potts 2003b, 915). Furthermore, the chronology of figurines present different dates. The figurine which was found at Failaka Island suggests that it may have been used for a long time as there were signs of restoration. It also seems that the buildings in the fortress had gone through several alterations. Some small parts of figurines were found in different layers, so we can not give a specific date to the figurines to a particular sequence. Future work would benefit from comparisons being made with typologies and chronologies from other sites. This is unfortunately beyond the scope of this study. Figurines that represent Greek themes are found throughout the entire Hellenistic period; however, some figurine belongs to the post-Hellenistic period (Mathiesen 1982, 72; Potts 2003b, 916). In addition, figurines may have had an ideological significance.

The figurines that were found at the fortress were a variety of the Eastern and Greek figurines. This may indicate that both the Eastern and Greek gods were worshiped on the island. A large number of naked female figurines were found at the site and perhaps this gives us an indication that the goddesses were worshiped on the Island. It should be noted that in the Greek world more female figurines were found than male figurines at sanctuaries, but in Failaka the majority of figurines were not predominately found in the temples but they were scattered all over the site, mostly found in the residential areas (Mathiesen 1982, 72; Potts 2003b, 912-3). This might

suggest that if the figurines were seen as powerful, their influence was desired in domestic setting. It might also mean that the votive aspects of the figurines were desired in locations other than the temple. In other contexts, fresh questions are being asked about figurines from the Neolithic period of southeastern Europe using theories of production, structured deposition, fragmentation, personhood, consumption, accumulation, and enchainment (i.e., the relationships between people and objects) (Chapman and Gaydarska 2007; see also Bailey *et al*. 2010, 16). Chapman and Gaydarska (2007) argue that many figurines were deliberately broken. Relationships between people and groups were established through exchange networks of the fragments. The breaking of the figurine does not break it ability to influence. Due to this, figurine fragments established new meanings, and were then deposited or distributed in different ways. In another example, excavations on the Cycladic island of Keros, which is a Greek island in the Cyclades about 9km southeast of Naxos, have indicated that the large quantities of early Bronze Age marble bowls, vessels, pottery and fragments of figurines were deliberately broken as a ritual of breakage, and specifically deposited (Renfrew *et al*. 2012). Moreover, a detailed study of the find conditions, including some patterns of breakage, suggest that these finds were not broken locally. They may therefore have been broken on another Cycladic islands then they brought to Keros for ritual disposal. It may be that the Failaka figurines were broken elsewhere and then brought to the island; alternatively, they might have been brought whole and broken on the island.

So, returning to the Failaka figurines, the traditional approach argues that examples looking like Greek gods (e.g. Hercules and Nike) were not representative of a local cult but rather a ruler cult. The latter indication is perhaps more logical because moulds for making Alexander the Great statues were found. As for Nike,

local worship is doubtful because Nike was very prevalent between the people during the Hellenistic period, and not significantly worshipped in the East. There was also an Aphrodite statue, but she may not have been worshiped in Failaka. As for the Eastern statues, such as the naked women, horsemen, horses and boats, they date to before the Hellenistic settlement on Failaka Island, where they were known in the Near East. This may indicate performative acts of worship on the island before the Hellenistic period (Mathiesen 1982, 72; Potts 2003b, 912). By incorporating the ideas of Chapman and Gaydarska (2007), we might further add that by emulating foreign styles in figurine creation, some people were actively working out who they were, and how they thought about others in the world.

It has been suggested that the figurines of naked women in the Near East demonstrated a cult for fertility (Mathiesen 1982, 72). This worship was widespread in the Near east. Although this interpretation is not conclusive and these figurines did not refer to a specific god, it shows a cohesive form worship that existed on the island (Mathiesen 1982, 72). We can not, however, assume that the naked women figurines were only for fertility, and they may have been used within other purposes, such as sexual or pornographic (Bailey *et al*. 2010, 16). As with today, women in the past may have been productive in society and not just reproductive. Figurines that look to us like women may have stimulated in a variety of ways. For example, figurines may have been used as gifts, or may have been made for other purposes, such as home decoration or to use in ritual funerary, or even in establishing who we are in the world.

As for the coins, during the excavations of the Danish team in the 1960s, two coin hoards were found. The first one contained twelve drachmas of Alexander the Great, imitating those of the Eastern Arabian Peninsula. It also has a drachma of

Antiochos III drachma, issued in Susa. The second coin hoard has several drachmas, including the Seleukos II type issued in Susa, three drachmas of Antoichos III also issued in Susa, and eight coins of King Abiatha (220 - 200BC) from the Eastern Arabian Peninsula. Moreover, bronze coins referring to the Hyspaosines King (209 – 124BC) have been found at the fortress of Characene. The Characene or Mesene Kingdom was located at the head of the Arabian Gulf, and included the land of Kuwait. Two Characene coins have also recently been found on Akkaz Island and Umm-al-Namel Island. They belonged to Attambalos II (17BC - AD8) and Theonisios II (AD46 - 52; see Potts 2003b, 916-924). A coin hoard containing various coins from several regions, such as Greece, Anatoilia, Phoenicia, Syria, Babylonia, Khuzistan and Median (in Iran) has also been found at Tell al-Khazna (Salles 1984, 291-6; Potts 2003b, 924).

These coins give us a working chronology of settlement at Failaka Island in the Hellenistic period and help to clarify the network of trade routes in that period. If we look at the Seleucid coins, they date from the late 4th century BC to the middle of the 2nd century BC. Furthermore, Characene coins may indicate that the fortress was controlled by the Characene ruler during the 1st century AD, or on the other hand, that trade and goods exchange were established. All the coins may demonstrate exchange in the Arabian Gulf in the Hellenistic period. For example, from the north there were coins issued in Susa and Characene and from the south there were coins issued in Arabia (Potts 2003b, 922-5).

6.4 Conclusion

The location of Failaka Island opposite the coast of Kuwait renders it ideal as a maritime trading centre. It can receive ships sailing from several regions, such as Susa, Seleucia Tigris, Characene and the southern Arabian Gulf. This was very clear through the coins and pottery found on the island. They confirm there were broad relationships with the other areas, such as Khuzestan, Babylon, the Eastern Arabian Peninsula and the southern coast of the Arabian Gulf. It suggests that there were local residents who spoke several languages or dialects. When the Seleucid placed garrisons on the island in the early 3rd century BC, there was coexistence between the Greek and the local population and this was evident through two types of figurine: Eastern and Greek figurine. Perhaps Failaka played a role in supplying Seleucid ships, which protected trade routes in the Arabian Gulf. Therefore, the establishment of settlements in Failaka was directly linked with the power and weakness of Seleucids. This again indicates that Kuwait was not isolated in the past but it had many ongoing and established relationships with other regions.

6.5 Summary

In this chapter I presented the proto-Hellenistic and Hellenistic sites in Kuwait. Furthermore, I introduced and discussed all its finds. This information was presented to show that Kuwait was settled in the past by several societies, as we have seen in previous chapters and in this chapter the proto-Hellenistic and Hellenistic sites in Kuwait. These settlements and relations will continue for years as we will see in next chapters.

Chapter 7

7.1 The Christian societies in the Arabian Gulf

Previous chapters have focused on trade, exchange and political structures as instigators for change and social structure within Kuwait; this chapter will look at how a world monotheist religion, namely Christianity, affected Kuwait. Although Christianity does exist today in modern Islamic Kuwait, there is little general awareness of a Christian dominant past. This situation is exacerbated unfortunately, by the archaeology for this period being scant, but this is slowly changing. This chapter will focus on the Christian period in the east of the Arabian Peninsula, and question how large its influence was. I will discuss when Christianity first arrived in the Arabian Peninsula and how it spread to the western side of the Arabian Gulf. I will consider the Christian sites in Kuwait and discuss the distribution of the archaeology in the Gulf, and see if there are commonalities. What was the date of al-Qusur (Kuwaiti church at Failaka)? Were there any indications for a Christian economy in the Gulf? Did the Syriac texts mention Christian societies in the Gulf? Did the Syriac texts mention Christian locations in the eastern Arabian Peninsula? This Chapter will illustrate that settlement in Kuwait continued from earlier periods into the Christian eras and that it was not isolated from the surrounding regions. Rather, it was influenced by changing political, economic and religious situations in the Arabian Gulf. Traditionally, there has been little evidence to suggest what people were doing and how they were living within the Christian periods. Yet, very recent investigations are beginning to paint a fuller picture. Here, we will tease out some of these possible narratives.

Christianity was not widely spread in the early centuries AD among the Arabs and other people. Initially the Romans contested Christianity as it conflicted with existing beliefs and politics. Such persecution in part led to some Christians moving eastwards to the Arabian Gulf to escape. Eventually, however, in AD313 Emperor Constantine helped create the Edict of Milan, legalizing Christianity. From this moment, Christianity's influence spread throughout the Empire and adjacent regions (Hellyer 2001, 86; Barnes 1981, 127-9). This included the Arabs living in the north of the Arabian Peninsula (al-Khatīb 2005, 289). Christianity probably entered to the Arabian Peninsula by three places: Syria in the north, Iraq in the northeast and Ethiopia in the West (Dughaim 1995, 66-7; see also al-Khatīb 2005, 289). Hellyer (2001, 86) reported that Christianity seems to have entered into the Arabian peninsula by the Roman Province of Arabia, which was located in what is now Jordan. Christianity eventually reached Yemen around AD350. The freedom to practise these beliefs may have led to faster acculturation and adoption in the Gulf regions.

Beyond the influence of the Roman Empire, Christianity gained influence in the eastern Arabian Gulf via several routes and events, such as the persecution of the Sasanian emperor Shapur II (AD309 – 379), the work of Christian missions and their movements, merchants and Arab tribes. The persecutions by the Sasanian emperor Shapur II started after Emperor Constantine's death in AD337 (Bernard *et al*. 1991, 26), when tax payment on the Christians was increased as contribution to the cost of the war between Persia and Rome. Many Christians in Mesopotamia and Persia refused to pay. This led Shapur II to punish and often kill them (Rassam 2005, 31). So some of them escaped to the eastern Arabian Gulf (Healey 2000, 225; Hellyer 2001, 86-7; Potts 2003b, 1014).

Hellyer (2001) stated that Christian societies certainly existed in the Arabian Gulf area by the late of the 4th century AD because the synod of the Assyrian church held in AD410 in Seleucia-Ctesiphone recorded the attendance of some bishops from the eastern Arabian Gulf (Healey 2000, 226). Seleucia-Ctesiphone was a commercial centre where the traders and caravans from other areas, such as Arabia, Central Asia, India and China, met and exchanged commodities. After the final rejection of Nestorius in AD451, the Church of the East, often referred to as the 'Nestorian Church', actively sought to spread its teachings further afield. Therefore, Nestorian missions of the Nestorian church followed the trade routes and evangelized the inhabitants of the Arabian Gulf (Healey 2000, 226).

The Nestorian missionaries reached the eastern part of Arabian Peninsula and then spread to the islands, such as Sir Bani Yas Island, Bahrain Island, Deirin, Failaka Island and Akkaz Island, which were located opposite the east coast of the Arabian Peninsula (see below). The eastern part of Arabian Peninsula is a strategic location with mainland and sea trade routes, a place where traders, importers (of mostly pottery maybe), fishermen and pearl-divers could meet, with monks taking advantage of these groupings to teach Christianity. This is documented in the records of the synods of the Nestorian church (Elders 2003, 234). Payne (2011) has suggested that such gatherings may also have been used by monks to exert social and economic influence by administration and gift donations (see further discussions below).

Christianity also reached this region by the Christian merchants who came to the Arabian Gulf region to buy pearls (Potts 2003b, 1014). The Arab tribes' movement reached the Christian centre in al-Hira (in the middle of Iraq) may have played a role in expanding Christianity in the region. For instance, the Abd al-Qays tribe, who controlled Bahrain, were Christian, and some of the Baker Bin Wā'il and

Kinda people were Christian (Carter 2008, 100). In Kuwait three Christian sites have been identified; all of them were found on the Kuwaiti islands. Two of them were found at al-Qusur in Failaka Island, and one was found on Akkaz Island. Were there other Christian sites on the Kuwaiti mainland? Below we will discuss this in detail.

7.1.1 Christain sites in Kuwait

Akkaz Island

Akkaz Island (the small Qurain) is a small island located within Kuwait Bay which became part of Shuwaikh port (see Figure 7.1). This Island was 12,000m² but is now reduced to 1,000m² as the government built Shuwiakh port on most of it (Carter 1972, 12; al-Najjar 1980, 5; Gachet 1998, 69; Shehab, al-Mutairi and al-Amir. 1993, 13; Salem 2007, 38; Shehab 2001, 135; Almutairi 2008, 37-8). The island was inhabited until 1972 by fishermen. There were seven hills on this island but due to the governmental project most of them have gone, except part of one which contains the site that I will discuss in detail below.

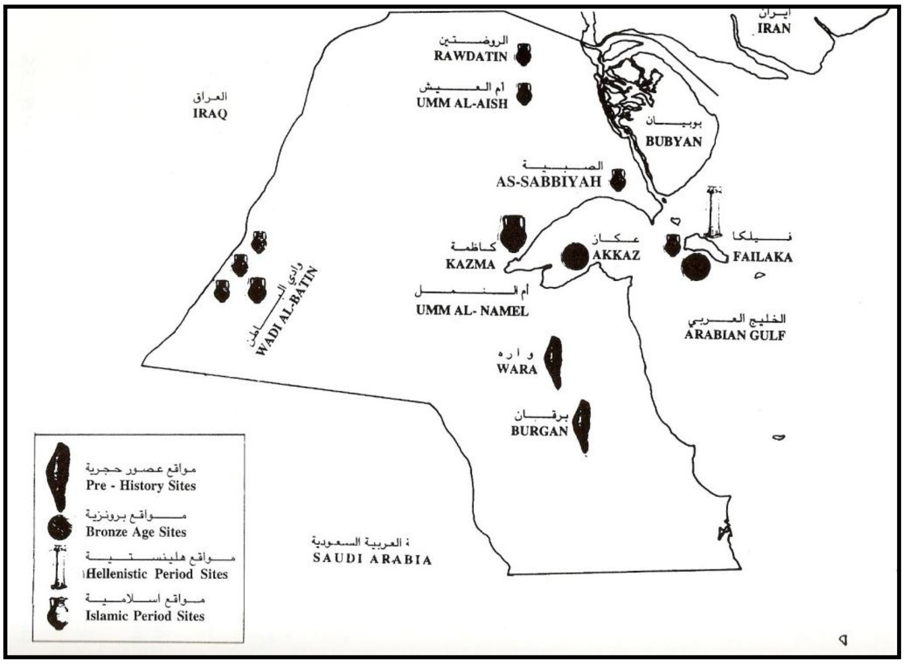


Figure 7.1. Schematic map showing the location of Akkaz Island in the Arabian Gulf (Hijjawi 1996, 40 – not to scale).

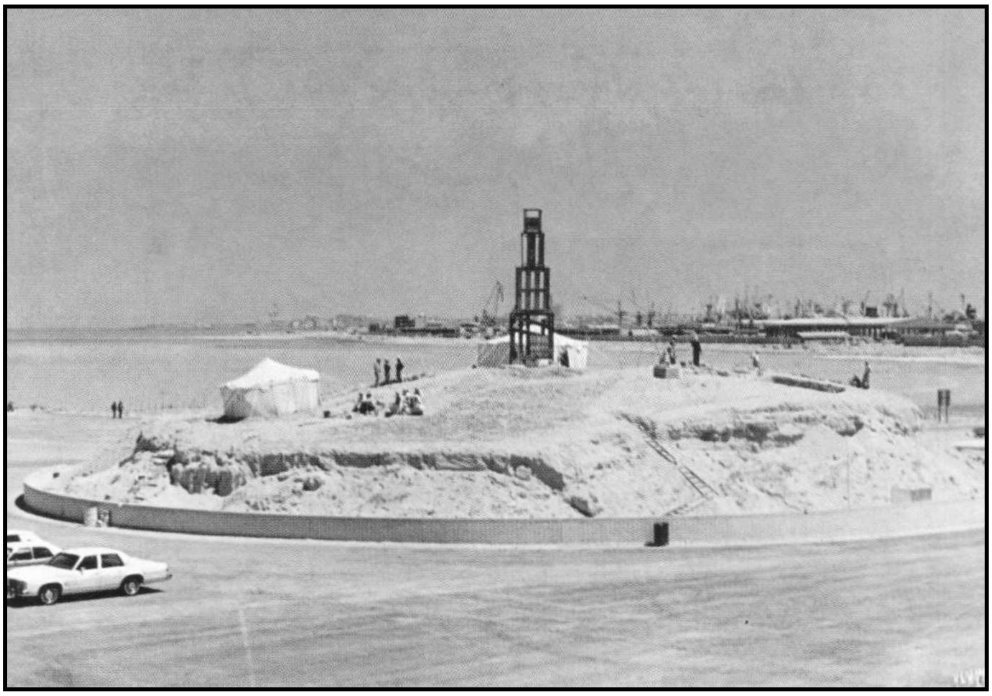


Figure.7.2. Showing the excavation in the last Tell which remained on Akkaz Island (al-Najjar 1980, 6).



Figure 7.3. Photograph showing the round-about which is the only part of Akkaz Island that remains (al-Mutairi 2011c, 34).

The first excavation of this site was conducted by the Kuwait and Jordan team in 1978, Kuwaiti team in 1984-1985 and Frensc and Kuwaiti team in 1993 (see Figures 7.2 and 7.3). The project revealed the existence of four phases, with Level 4 being the earliest (Shehab 2001, 137).

The first stage of the excavation

Level 1: The Kuwait and French team started cleaning up the previous squares that were excavated in 1984-1985 and found stucco covered floors. During the excavations a small 10 x 10cm stucco piece was found with a cross on it. The team concluded that this building belonged to a Christian (see Figure 7.4; Shehab, al-Mutairi and al-Amir. 1993, 18-9; Gachet 1998, 75; Shehab 2001, 141). By increasing the excavations, the stucco floors and walls proved that they belonged to a Church. The Church is similar to al-Qusur church at Failaka which was found in the 1988-1989 seasons by the French team.

Unfortunately, most of the parts of the church were found in poor condition; however, the southern part of the church is preserved. The foundations of this church were built from local beach rocks and the walls were built from mudbrick, covered by stucco (Shehab, al-Mutairi and al-Amir1993, 19; Gachet 1998, 75).



Figure.7.4. Photograph showing cross in a piece stucco (Shehab, al-Mutairi and al-Amir 1993, 48).

In the southern parts of the church was an entrance to the courtyard and from the right side of the entrance there was a grave. This is perhaps another indication that this building belonged to a church as often within Christian doctrines, people are buried within the sanctified Church grounds. Such burials often contain people of note. There is a similar grave in al-Qusur church (Shehab, al-Mutairi and al-Amir. 1993, 19). The finds at this level also included various fragments of Sassanian and Islamic pottery. This level dates to the 9th and 10th century AD (al-Najjar 1980, 6; Shehab, al-Mutairi and al-Amir 1993, 20; Shehab 2001, 141).

The second stage of excavations

Level 2: The aim of this season was to complete the previous excavations (e,g, 1978; 1984-1985) of the wall, which was discovered on northern side of the site. The Kuwait and French team completed the excavation of this wall. It is circular in shape and it is about 1m high, 18m in diameter, and its width is 1.20m. The dry-stone wall is constructed of rocks without any mortar or consolidating material (al-Najjar 1980, 8). It was noted that the rocks were removed from the top of the wall and thrown inside the circular area created by the wall (see Figures 7.5 and 7.6). The rock wall was used as the foundation of the church. From the western part of the site there is a wall between the circular wall and the church. It may have been used to strengthen the wall of the church (Gachet 1998, 73; Shehab, al-Mutairi and al-Amir 1993, 20-1; Shehab 2001, 142).

Coins that were stacked one on another were found on the floor surfaces. They have been cleaned by Altra Sonic in the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research; this revealed 15 Islamic coins. An example is a single coin with ‘la ilaha illa Allah’ (there is no god except Allah), inscribed on its face. On the frame was written that this coin was issued in al-Salam city (Baghdad city) in AH157 [*anno Hegirae* - in the year of the Hijra], which is AD773 (Shehab, al-Mutairi and al-Amir. 1993, 15-6; Shehab 2001, 142). The occurrence of Islamic coins within a Christian building may suggest a chance occurrence or find, or it might suggest bigger themes such as successful economic networks between different areas of religious influence (see further discussions in Chapter 8). It may alternatively indicate that people here were Christians living within an Abbasid state with Abbasid coinage.



Figure 7.5. Photograph showing a floor covered by stucco (al-Mutairi 2011c, 35).



Figure 7.6. Photograph showing the Akkaz site after excavation (al-Mutairi 2011c, 34).

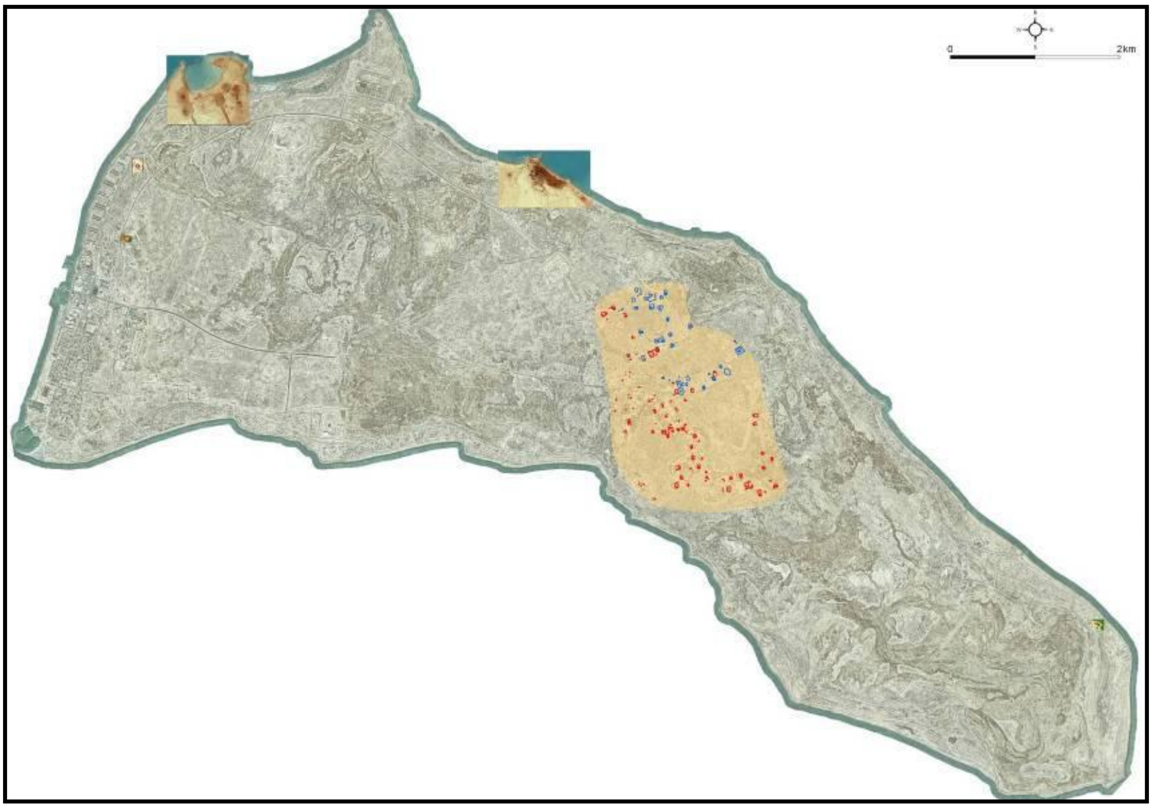


Figure 7.7. Map showing the location of al-Qusur on Failaka Island (Benedikovà 2010, 35).

Work at Al-Qusur

The term ‘al-Qusur’ is locally indentified as ‘the palaces’. It is a famous archaeological site, being a raised area located in the centre of Failaka Island. The highest point is about 5m and the lowest is about 2m (see Figure 7.7). The whole area of al-Qusur covers about 2 x 2.6km. It bordered by marshes to the east and the west. The easiest route to the shore is from the north and the south. The positioning of the site here possibly created a secure religious haven, maybe from the Sasanians, as the settlement could not be seen from the sea and beaches (Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 422). There is no evidence for fortification or defences. The archaeological structures, such as foundations of courtyard, enclosures and small structures, were recorded by aerial survey in 1960 (Benedikovà 2010, 11; Shehab 2007b, 20-1; Benedikovà 2008, 48; Callot and Calvet 1999, 7; Bernard and Salles 1990, 7).

The first excavation of al-Qusur was by the Italian team in the 1970s (Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 422; Callot and Calvet 1999, 7; Bernard and Salles 1990, 7). In the late 1980s, the site was managed by the French team project (Benedikovà 2010, 11). In 1989, excavations revealed church A1 (Bernard *et al*. 1991, 1-3; Bernard and Salles 1991, 7). The excavations demonstrated that the middle area of the site was established by a monastery with its church dated to the 6th - 7th century AD and it was surrounded by numerous settled areas (see Figure 7.8). The area also contained a large village with courtyard houses, dating to the 7th – 8th century AD (Benedikovà 2010, 11; Callot and Calvet 1999, 7). In 2008, another church at al-Qusur called church A2 was discovered (Benedikovà 2010, 11; Callot 2008, 25; al-Mutairi 2011c, 18). So far over 140 settlement units have been recorded at al-Qusur (Benedikovà 2010, 11; Benedikovà 2008, 48).



Figure 7.8. Plan of the church A1 at al-Qusur (Bernard *et al*. 1991, 167).

The architecture of Al-Qusur church A1

Al-Qusur church A1 is about 36m long and 19m wide. It is rectangular in plan and oriented approximately east to west. From the western part of the church, there is a long room 15.5 x 2.6m; perhaps it was the narthex. The room has three doors on its western side. There was another door along the northern wall of the church leading to an unexcavated structure. The fifth door was found in the south part of the church. Moreover, there were three doors leading to the nave and its aisle to the east. Only one of the eight doors closed with door-leaves. The central door leads to the nave and the northern aisle has three apertures to the exterior. The southern aisle has three doors with a locking system to the nave. The final one to the east, to an apsidial chapel, was completely sealed by plaster. The dimension of southern aisle was about 17.5 x 3.5m with a door leading to the southern outside and three doors leading to the nave, and a western door was leading to an absidial chapel. The southern aisle was shorter than the northern one (there are no measurements of the northern aisle in the French report; Bernard and Salles 1991, 9).

In 1988, in the southern aisle they found fragments of dressed stone decorated with Christian crosses. Similar fragments were found in the southern chapel in 1989. All of them were broken and scattered on the floor. There is no evidence for deliberate breakage, and the destruction seems to be via deposition and through collapse. There was an empty recess in the M5 wall and there was another one in the M13 wall, which contained fragments of human bone and shell, possible indicating funeral offerings (Bernard and Salles 1991, 9). The central nave was about 19m long and 5.6m wide. From the southeast corner, there was a narrow passageway and door giving access to the southern chapel; to the east the choir was separated from the nave by three steps. The choir is about 5.6m long and 7.5m wide. It has a recess in the

eastern wall and narrow steps going down to the aisle chapels on each part. All the access routes were closed by doors. The northern chapel was about 3.6 x 7.5m, and forms a cross in plan with three recesses in the walls. In the eastern recess four sockets cut in the stucco floor might be evidence for an altar table that held a reliquary. The southern chapel was about 9.3 x 3.6m, presenting similarities with the northern chapel, although it was larger. In addition, there were recesses in its walls (Bernard and Salles 1991, 9).

There was a niche in the southwest corner that has a small stucco frame in a circular curve. It was probably a small basin used for holy water or for religious objects – perhaps a water jug stood here. There was a door in the chapel leading to the southern buildings. Opposite, there was a door leading to two rooms. The first one was about 2.5 x 3.6m and it has a recess in its southern wall. This recess was possibly used as a cupboard. There was another recess in the northern one. There was a partition wall with a door dividing this room from another square room to the east. The square room was about 3.6 x 3.6m. In the centre of this room, there was a very rough column made of stones. It was possibly used as a central column of a grinder. This may indicate that the church had become deconsecrated sometime after the 7th century AD. Reasons for this might include Christians converting to Islam. The grinder had damaged the partition that was between the two rooms (Bernard and Salles 1991, 9).

In general, the building has two parts, the first one was a public area containing the nave for the church ceremonies that was separated from the choir by a chancel. The second part included the choir, the two aisle-chapels and the dependencies, with a separating door. It was possibly an area of the church used for attendants or priests. The walls of the church were about 1.60m thick and built of mud

bricks without substantial foundations. All the walls were covered by white and thick stucco and there was no evidence for painting (Bernard and Salles 1991, 10).

Stratigraphic chronology

Level 1: The stucco floor of the building did not have any sherds of pottery. The earliest stage of the building is formed by floor S41, which was located in front of the threshold of door P49 in the northern wall. A sherd of pottery was found in the stone that was opposite wall M56 in the southern chapel. There was no eggshell pottery found in this level. This level dates to the first half of the 7th century AD.

Level II: During the excavation of the northern and southern main walls, sherds of pottery were found on a sandy layer of external floor that was later covered by the collapsed building. This may indicate that the main settlement was possibly at this level. A large vessel of eggshell pottery was found, with fragments of a glazed deep bowl and stamped decoration on common ware (Bernard and Salles 1991, 11). Imported Turquoise glazed wares were discovered, which have cream or pink-cream fine clay; similar bowls were found in early Islamic sites, such as Susa in Iran (Ptitucci and Uggeri 1984, 423). They were carinated wares (Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 423). These wares were also found at SBY-9, which is on an island located in Abu Dhabi, and at Jazirat al-Hulaylah in Ras al-Khaimah. Some fragments of Unglazed stamped jars were found, made from a cream pinkish/yellowish fine clay. Similar examples of this type of pottery have been found in Mesopotamia, such as Hira, Telul al-Khudair, and Susa. This type can be dated to the 7th and 9th century AD (Ptitucci and Uggeri 1984, 424). Local objects include a few fragments of cooking ware. They were thin with reddish fabric with a coarse surface (Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 425). Thin green glass was found at Sa'ida Village and al-Quraniya sites at Failaka Island (see Chapter 8). Sa'ida Village dates between the 15th to the beginning

of 19th century AD (al-Mutairi 2010, 179), while al-Quraniya dates from 7th to 16th century AD (Ptitucci and Uggeri 1984, 419 – 21). The predominance of imported ceramics that are found throughout Mesopotamia and the Gulf regions suggests a level of communication and movement of both ideas and materials (see also Chapters 3 and 5).

Level III: Dates from the 7th to the 10th century AD, with a few pieces of pottery being found on more than 45m² of the floors. A lamp was found in the northern chapel that dates to the early Islamic period. Eggshell pottery was found and its angular profile dates to the second half of the 8th – 9th century AD. This period was contemporaneous with the Abbasid period. It might be that the church was abandoned in the second half of the 8th century AD (Bernard and Salles 1991, 11).

Level IV: When the long rooms collapsed, small parts of the building survived and appear to have been resettled. The door P80 which is located in the southern chapel was probably closed and a grinder was built in the southern room. Found in the deposit was aelian sand, which was on the earthen floor, and several objects such as a lapis-lazuli bead, an awl, fish nets, fragments of pottery, such as a glazed of amphora that was well known during the Partho-Sassanian period (248BC - AD637), and eggshell sherds that date to the second half of the 8th century AD. There was lack of polychrome glazed pottery, which was common in the 9th century AD. This level may have been abandoned and later reoccupied by Muslims. The level dates to the late 8th century AD (Bernard and Salles 1991, 12).

The second church at Al-Qusur

Church A2

In 2008, the French team discovered a single building just to east of al-Qusur church. This building is rectangular shaped with a quadrangular apse (see Figure 7.9). Its floor was covered by plaster and had a cross in it (see Figure 7.10). It is called Church A2 (Callot 2008, 25). The church is set on an artificial platform, which contains at least seven coarses of uncut rock and sandstone. Some of them were pieces of basalt millstone, which were perhaps imported from outside Failaka. The reason for the importation of stone was as a result of a shortage of natural stone suitable for building on the island. The dimensions of this church are about 17.5 x 6.7m (Callot 2008, 25; al-Mutairi 2011c, 18).

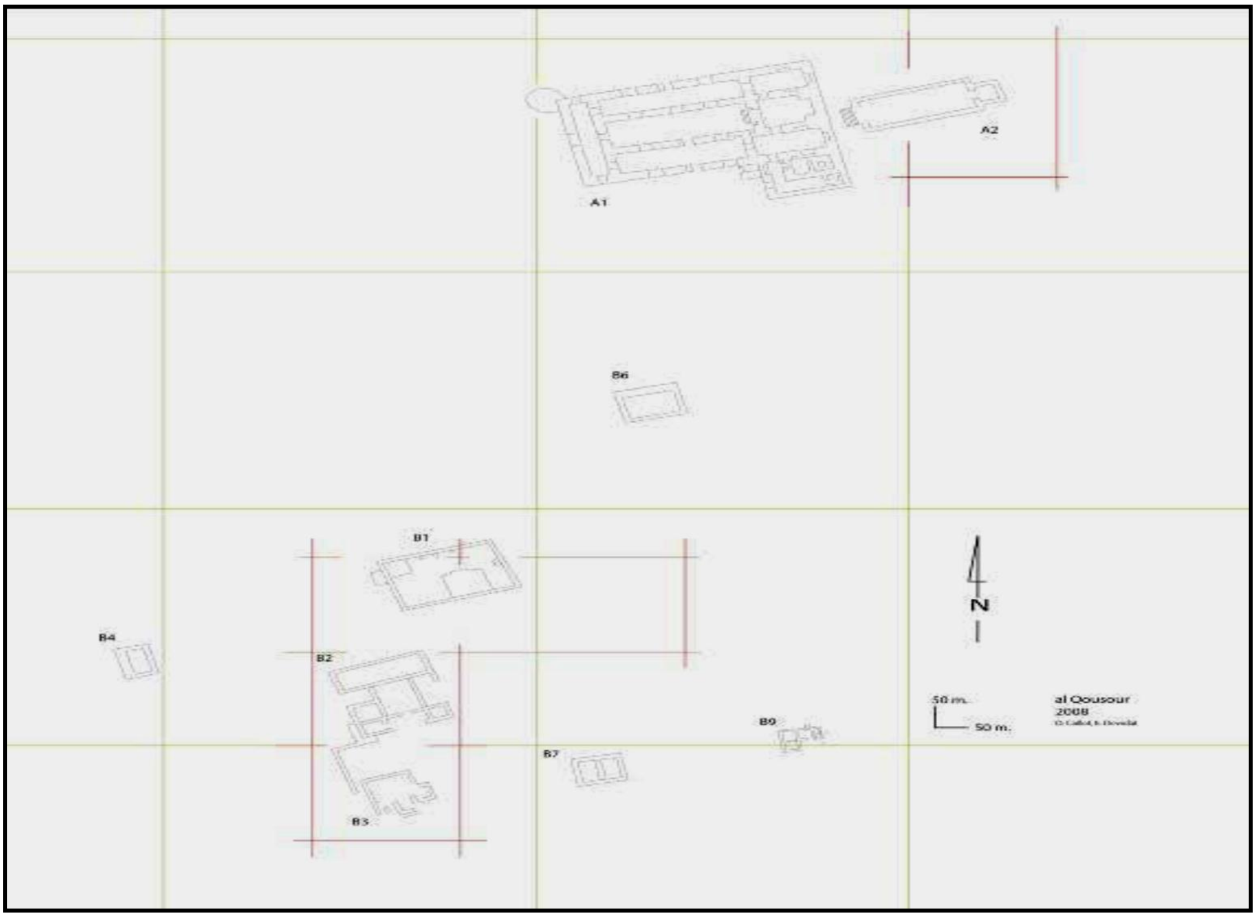


Figure 7.9. The top parts of this plan show the two churches; the lower parts indicate the locations of the houses (Callot 2008, 21).



Figure 7.10. Photograph showing a cross on the floor of the church A2 (Callot 2008, 28).



Figure 7.11. Photograph showing the plan of church A2 (Callot 2008, 25).

The nave of church A2 is about 16.10 x 5.75m. Its floor is about 0.77m above the level of the surrounding natural layer (see Figure 7.11). The church has several different floor levels. The level in the southern part is lower than the northern. This could have resulted from a landslide, meaning that the southern level of the church is not very well preserved. However, the floor of the nave is still in a good condition. A layer of uncut sandstone coated by stucco can still seen in some places (Callot 2008, 26).

The stairs

There was only one entrance via the stairs in the west of the church. The stairs contain five steps which are about 1.80m deep. The highest step is about 0.35m high and the lowest step is about 0.25m high. The whole entire church was covered by stucco (Callot 2008, 26).

The apse and its arches

The excavators describe that in the prolongation of the nave, a quadrangular apse closes the plan of the church (Callot 2008, 26). The apse is formed by four arches with supporting stone walls that contain traces of stucco. The northern wall is about 3.45m long, 0.58 deep and 1.15m high. The stucco covering is well preserved. The southern wall measures about 3.75m long and is 0.58m deep. The internal face was covered by stucco; it was poorly preserved (Callot 2008, 26-7). The western wall possibly contained an access inside to the apse by a door, which is about 1.80m wide and about 0.16m down. The door has a threshold covered by stucco. The eastern wall measures about 4.70m long and 0.75m deep. It is covered by stucco and it was not well preserved (Callot 2008, 26-7).

The French team also excavated a small building the southeast corner of the church measuring about 4.60m long. The building stone was built of rough rocks joined by a grey mortar, which can still seen in some places. Both northern and southern sides have a door measuring about 0.50m wide. A tanūr (oven) was found in the southeast corner of the building; it was about 0.31m in diameter. This building was probably a kitchen (Callot 2008, 30-1).

The Slovakian team excavated several houses in al-Qusur during their seasons between 2006 - 2009. The team excavated more than 35 sites in al-Qusur. We can not cover all of them here but I will choose some of them as examples as they demonstrate similar architectural plans with others in the region, such as the SBY-9 house in the United Arab Emirates.

Courtyard 1

This courtyard was adjoined to a house that has well-preserved foundations, although some parts of its fence had collapsed. The partition wall of the house was also damaged. The entrance of the house was in the northwest corner. The walls were about 0.50m wide. To the north of the fence, there was a large building with semicircular walls. Perhaps it was for animals. There was also a small building in the southwest yard corner that was probably used as storage (Benedikovà 2010, 12). The fence measures about 22 x 30m and its base is about 0.50m wide with a hole in southeast corner. The entrance was from the east side of the fence. There was a column in the southeast corner (Benedikovà 2010, 12). Some objects were found on the surface, such as green glazed and yellow pottery sherds, a carbonized date stone (*Phoenix dactylifera;* see Chapter 5*)* near the southwest corner of the building, and glass sherds, such as two green fragments, one smoked-light and brown-violet bottle rim (Benedikovà 2010, 12). The occurrence of date stones is potentially significant;

recent work by Payne (2011), has suggested that economic power was centralized to some extent at monastic sites, with religious leaders controlling the flow of money and dates (*Phoenix dactylifera)*. It is argued that dinars (money) as donations and dates (*Phoenix dactylifera)* were basic to monastic life (Payne 2011, 106). Within Payne's (2011) model, stones found in the domestic areas may indicate the working relationships between local people and religious figures. It might, however, just mean that some people liked to eat dates.

Courtyard 4

This courtyard was a small badly damaged court-yarded house. The excavation of the house did not reveal an obvious plan but was possibly rectangular shaped. Its floor was covered by stucco. There were three small structures in the corners of the fence. There were some fragments of the fence from the north, west, and south sides. It was perhaps about 20 x 20m. The finds of this courtyard comprised a lot of pottery sherds and a glass vessel. Most of them were found inside the remains of the house. In the internal areas of this building, flints (firestones), yellow and glazed table and storage pottery, three transparent and pressed glass, a handle of a small jug, circular bronze objects, three smoked light brown-violet glass fragments were found (e.g. three bases of bottles and eight cup rims; Benedikovà 2010, 13).

Courtyard 9

This was a courtyard house that still had foundations that were about 0.80m wide. The house is square shaped and built of large stones. There were three small structures in the fence corners. The fence is about 33 x 40m. It has some recesses in the southwest and southeast sides. The southern side of the fence was missing. From the western side there were remains of a column. The finds were not systemically recorded (Benedikovà 2010, 14).

Courtyard 11

This was a house with well-preserved visible foundations (*c*. 0.50m wide) and a courtyard. The house dimension was about 8 x 6m and rectangular shaped. There were three small outbuildings in the east and west sides of the fence. To the southwest house corner there was a square building about 2.5 x 2.5m. The house fence was heavily denuded and was about 35 x 45m. In the east side there were column remains. The finds were not systemically recorded (Benedikovà 2010, 115).

The courtyard houses that were excavated at Kharg and Sir Bani Yas (King 1997, 229) could have belonged to the monks, or families associated with helping the church (Payne 2011, 103). Elders (2001) suggested that the great cells with their courtyards which were located not far away from the monastery were used by ascetics. This may indicate that the courtyard houses at al-Qusur performed similar functions. Elders (2003) reported that the houses that are not far from the monastery have similar forms, construction techniques and finds (which were few) were contemporaneous with the monastery. The plan of the houses was the most common feature between them. All of them have yards and three rooms inside that clustered

around a main room, which has subset access leading to these rooms and to an outside yard. Each house has a water tank. These houses were small models of the monastery/church and they were fairly spartan, having few archaeological remains, making it hard to determine function. It is also hard at this stage to determine if we are looking at a monastery with monks or a church with secular clergy.

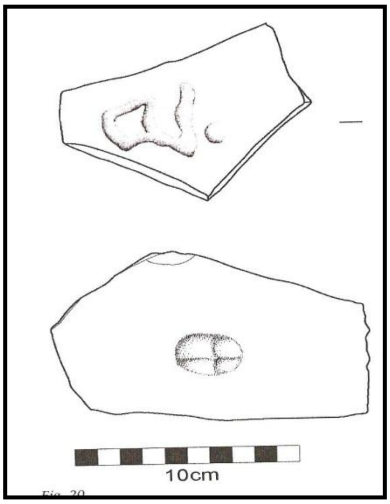


Figure 7.12. Illustration of two sherds of pottery which have Christian and Islamic symbols (Carter 1999, 47; Carter 2008, 99).

There are other indications of Christian presence in the Arabian Gulf region. A sherd of a Torpedo jar (mostly used for transportation) with a stamped cross was found on the north coast of Kuwait Bay at Sabbiyah (Carter 1999, 44-7; see Figure 7.12). Another sherd was found close to this site but with name of Allah inscribed in it – again possibly indicating relations between the two religions. The usage of the term ‘Allah’ is not, however, purely Islamic, as the Church of Jerusalem today also write and say this word. Also found was a T symbol in the Mudairah rock, which perhaps is a simplified or abstracted cross (al-Duwaish 2008, 17; see also Chapter 3).

Christian archaeology in the Arabian Gulf

There have been several sites found in the Arabian Gulf region, such as Kharg Island, Sir Bani Yas Island, Jubayl, Thaj, Jabal Berri and al-Hinnah (see Figure 7.13).

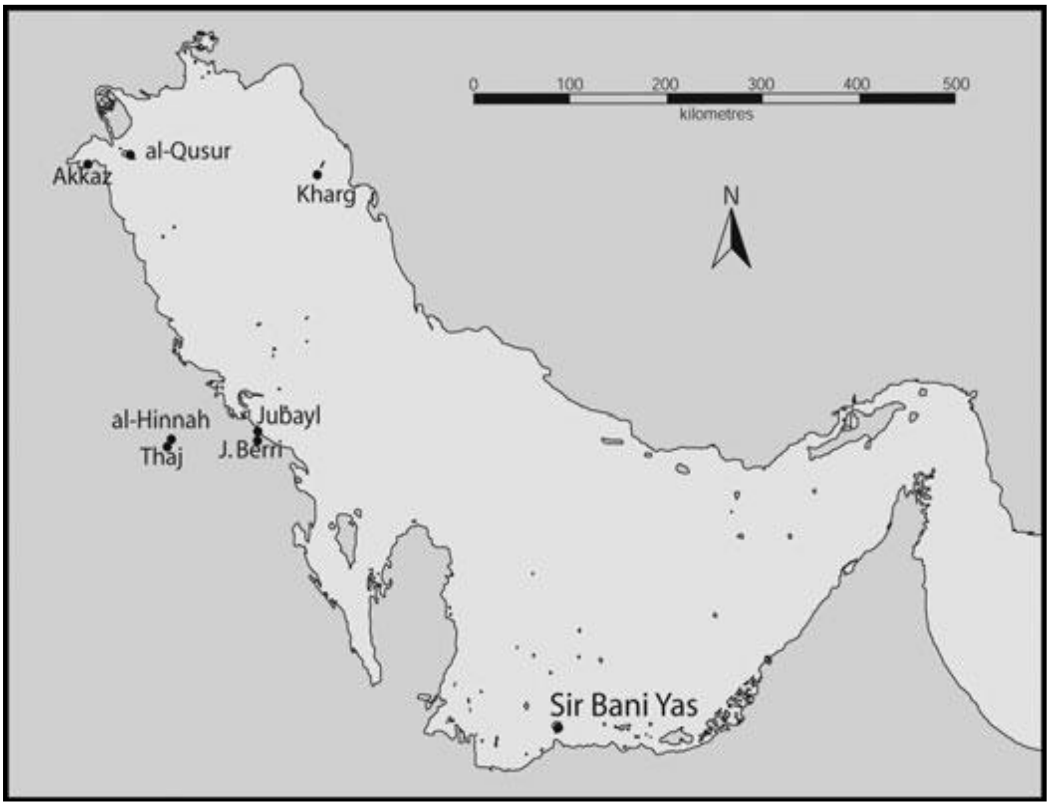


Figure 7.13. Map showing some locations associated with Christianity (Carter 2008, 72).

Kharg Island

Kharg Island is located approximately 40km opposite the Bushihr coast in Iran. A huge monastic complex was discovered on this island by Ghrishman in the end of the 1950s (see Figure 7.14). He dated this monastery from the 5th to the 6th century AD (Bowmann 1971, 49-50; Carter 2008, 97), but in more recent publications (e.g. Steve 2003), it is dated to the 6th or early 7th century AD (Carter 2008, 97). Kennet (2007) noted that there were 98 published sherds but these are not dated to before the 9th century AD, except for a small fragment of glazed bowl, which was similar to a Sir

Bani Yas fragment dated to the 8th century AD (Carter 2008, 98). The plaques and friezes of the moulded stucco in Kharg demonstrate a post-Sassanian period (AD224 - 637).

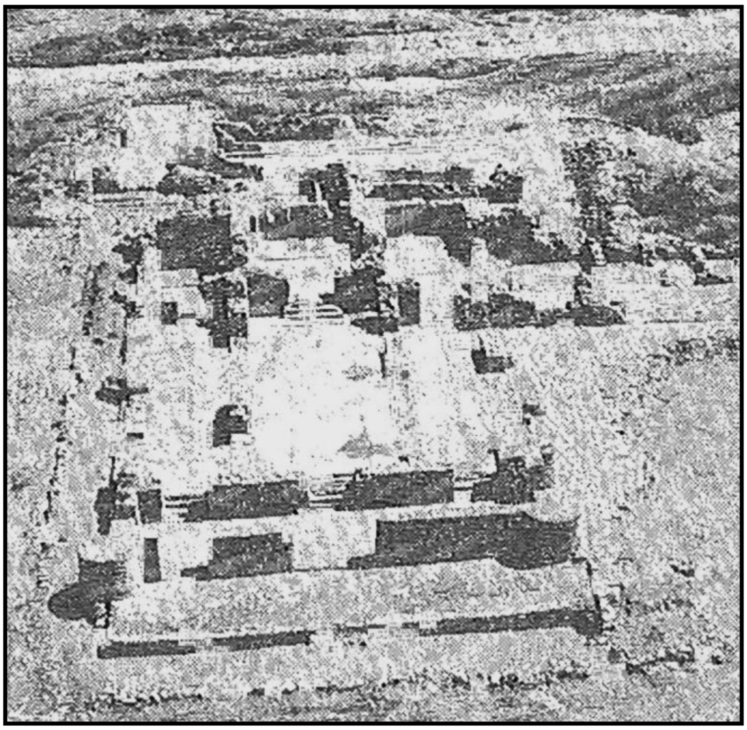


Figure 7.14. Photograph showing the Kharg church (Bowmann 1971, 50).

Crosses and stucco similar to that seen at Kharg were found in the Ain Sha'ia church, which is located in the southern desert region of Iraq (Okada 1992, 88). The dating for this site has been contested with some suggesting it dates between the end of the 6th and early 8th century AD (Steve 2003, 114). Others suggest between the mid 7th and the late 10th century AD based on radiocarbon analyses (i.e. GaK-14261 (AS 103) 1260 ± 80, calibrating to AD640–970 at 95.4 % probability, or AD660–830 at 61.7 %; Okada & Numoto 1989: 61). The excavator of 'Ain Sha'ia church suggested that its foundation can be dated to the late 8th or 9th century AD (Orkada 1992, 93; Orkada and Numoto 1989, 61). From this we may suggest that the church of Kharg Island cannot be dated to before the mid 7th century AD, and if it existed later than the

al-Qusur monastery, it possibly dates to the mid 8th century AD. Furthermore, pottery from both sites also suggest that date. Kharg church most probably dates to the 9th century AD. Therefore, it would be later than the al-Qusur and Sir Bani Yas churches (Carter 2008, 98).

Sir Bani Yas Island (SBY-9)

This island is located opposite the Abu-Dhabi coast (see Figure 7.15). The Abu-Dhabi Island Archaeological Survey (ADIAS) discovered this site in 1992 at Sir Bani Yas Island (King *et al*. 1995, 65-72; King 1998; Elders 2003, 230). SBY-9 monastery was found among an assemblage of sites extending along an area of the coastal plain measuring 1.5km east-west and 2km north-south. It dates to 8th century AD. The other sites were courtyard houses (Elders 2003, 230).



Figure 7.15. Photograph showing carved crosses at SBY-9 (Elders 2003, 231).

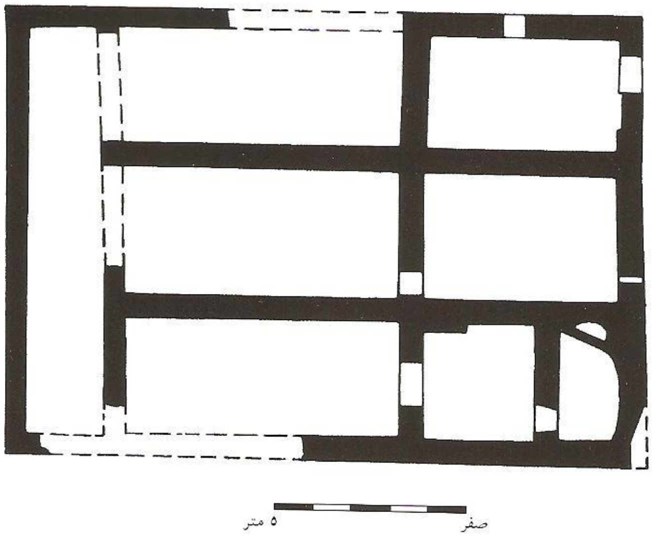


Figure 7.16. The plan of SBY-9 church (Elders 2003, 233).

SBY-9 is a mound measuring 220 x 160m and is about 2m high (King 1995, 25). It contains three sites: SBY-9.1, SBY-9.2 and SBY-9.3. Pottery and moulded stucco were found spread on the site's surface. The excavations of 1993 – 1996 revealed that SBY-9 was a complex of monasteries containing a church with stucco cross fragments (see Figure 7.16). The church was excavated in 1995. It measured approximately 11m long and 16m wide (King 1997, 226; Elders 2003). The church contained three parts: a classic basilica shape with a central nave and a square chancel or apse. The nave is located in the middle, between the northern and southern aisles. The chancel has two adjoin rooms, with an entrance at one end, and probably a bell tower in the south (Elders 2001, 49-51).

Jubayl

Jubayl is a city located in the east of Saudi Arabia. It is divided into two parts; the residential area and the industrial area. In 1986, a Christian site was accidently discovered by a young Saudi when his four wheel vehicle became stuck in a dune to the west of Jubayl. While he was digging under his car wheel, he found that he was on a wall. He informed the police and they dug around this wall with the help of a building contractor and his power-tools. This led to the damage of the whole north side of the site. There were many crosses on the wall (see Figures 7.17 and 7.18). This indicates that this site belonged to a church or Christian society. In 1987, the Saudi Department of Antiquity excavated the site, but did not publish the excavation (Langfeldt 1994, 32-3).

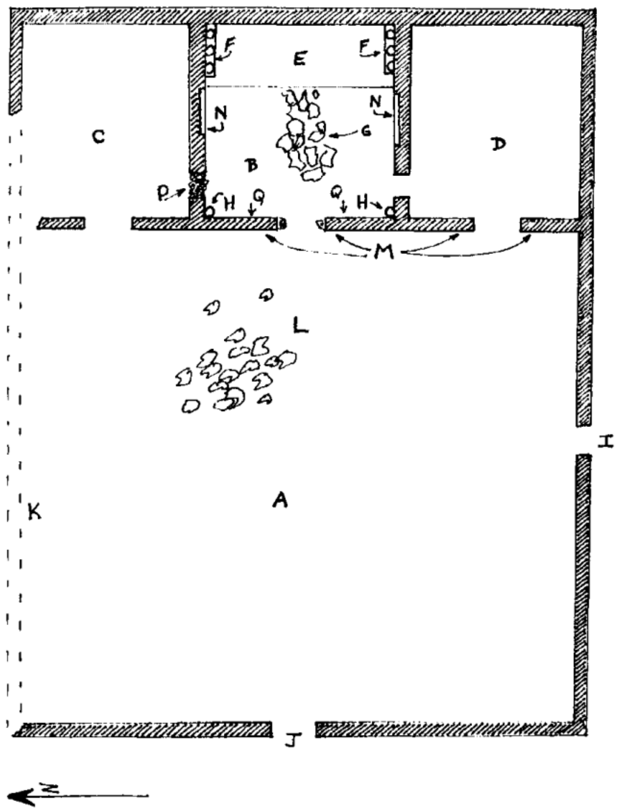


Figure.7.17. Schematic plan of Jubayl church (Langfeldt 1994, 33 – not to scale).

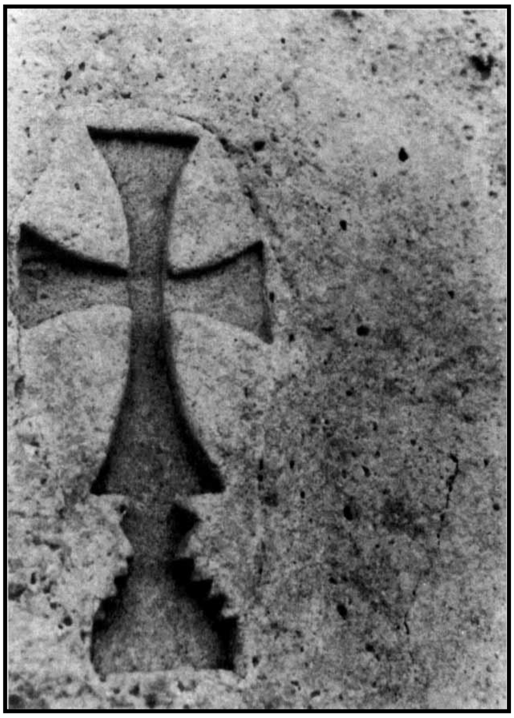


Figure 7.18. Photograph showing another cross found in Jubayl church (Langfeldt 1994, 36).

Langfeldt (1994) visited this site and determined that it was a church with an open courtyard, approximately 15 - 20m². There were three rooms with doors in the east side of the church. The three rooms were approximately the same size: 4 x 5m². There were two doors in the southern and western sides of the courtyard and it is suspected that there was another in the northern side which was damaged. All the walls are covered by stucco (Langfeldt 1994, 34). Interestingly, the internal columns of this structure are very similar to the columns at Khirbat al-Kharana Umayyad an 8th century AD 'palace' in Jordon (Pringle pers comm.; see Figure 7.19). Such similarities that spans almost 200 years could be purely functional; meaning that survival indicates a solution worth copying. Or it might mean that there were similarities on thought and belief. Alternatively, there may be chronological issues.

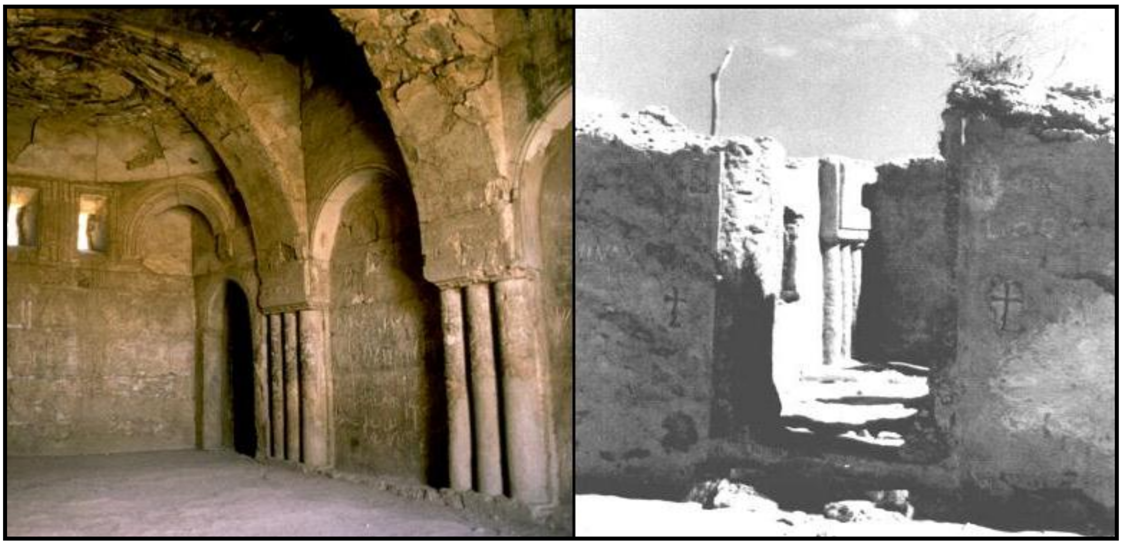


Figure.7.19. The similarities of columns. Right: Khirbat al-Kharana. Left: Jubayl church entrance (Langfeldt 1994, 35; photo: Denys Pringle).

Carter (2008) reported that there were unpublished reports showing that the church has a unique layout; although the stucco features render it similar to other churches in the Arabian Gulf. There is no specific date for this church due to the absence of publication, but its stucco is similar to those in al-Qusur, Sir Bani Yas and Kharg (Carter 2008, 98). It was mentioned in the Chronicle Seert that there was reorganisation of the bishoprics of the Arabian Gulf region in the late 6th century AD, where Mesopotamia and Bahrain became a single bishopric (Potts 2003b, 1031). In that time the Jacobite sect, Monophisitism, became popular and this church may have belonged to the Jacobite sect (Carter 2008, 98). Such an interpretation is, however, based on its difference in ground plan, rather than its similarities to other Arabian Gulf churches.

Thaj

Thaj is located in eastern Saudi Arabia about 150km northwest of Dahran city and about 90km west of Jubayl. Thaj is a huge site measuring about $8km^2$; it could be the largest site in the Arabian Peninsula. It spans several periods, with graves dating to 500BC, the Hellenistic period (300BC), and the Christian and Islamic periods of the early 6^{th} century AD (Eastern archaeology; Langfeldt 1994, 44). An unexcavated building at this site was indentified as a church as there were rock slabs engraved with crosses flanking the entrance (see Figure 7.20; Langfeldt 1994, 44-8). There is no evidence to date it and it can not be confirmed that this building was definitely a church, but without doubt it related to a Christian society (Carter 2008, 98).



Figure 7.20. Photograph showing three tombstones that have crosses in Thaj (Langfeldt 1994, 45).

Jabal Berri

Jaba Berri is a small rock hill located in the eastern part of Saudi Arabia, about 10km southwest of Jubayl and approximately 7km from the coast (Potts 1994, 61; see Figure 7.21).

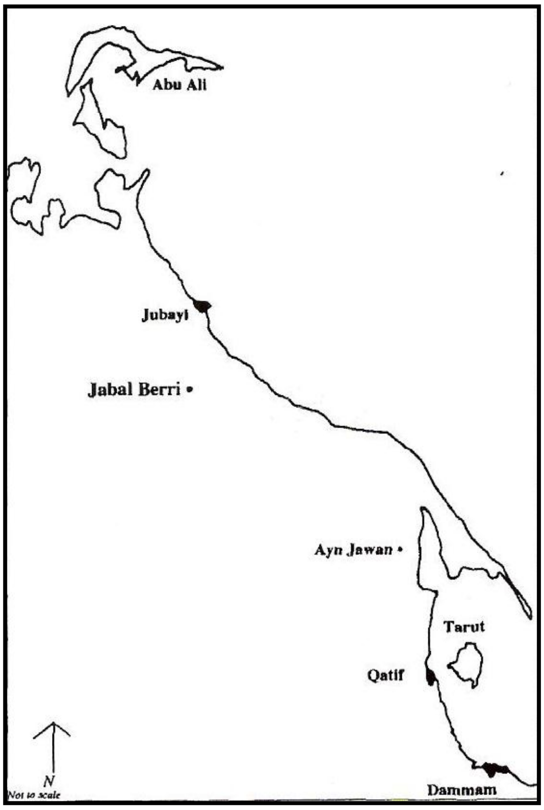


Figure 7.21. Map showing Jabal Berri's location in the eastern Arabian peninsula (Potts 1994, 61-not to scale).

Two crosses made of bronze were discovered at this site and there was also one cross made of mother of pearl (Potts 1994, 61; Carter 2008, 98). One of the bronze crosses, which was published for the first time by Potts (1994), was incomplete (see Figure 7.22). It was about 0.2cm thick. The sheet metal dimensions were about 1.6cm at their narrowest points and 3cm wide at each end. The horizontal sheet was about 8.4cm long and the vertical sheet was about 7.3cm high. The upper part of the vertical sheet was missing. The serifs were about 1.4 - 1.5cm in diameter.

Also missing were two of the serifs from the left sheet and from the lower part of the vertical sheet (Potts 1994, 61).

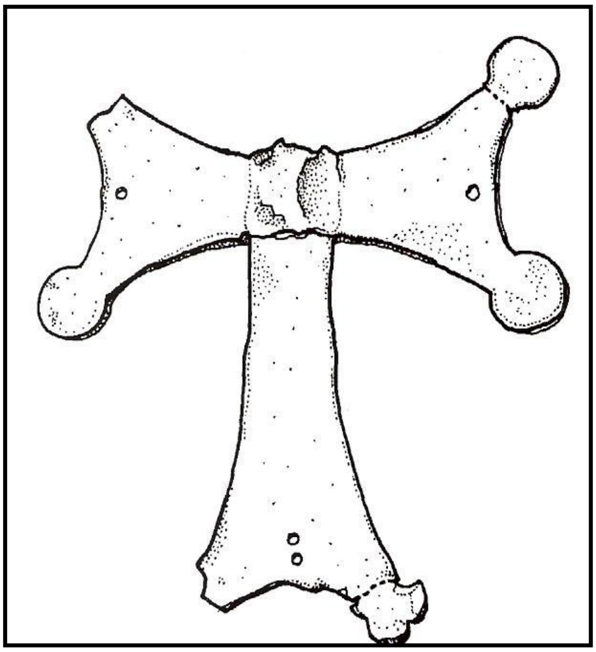


Figure 7.22. Drawing of a bronze cross from Jabal Berri (Potts 1994, 62 – not to scale).

There were four holes in the cross, which may have been part of its decoration or to fix it with another object (Potts 1994, 62), but more likely for suspension, maybe with lamps (Israeli Mevorah 2000, 104). This type of cross with decoration was popular during the 6th and 7th century AD (Weitzmann 1982, 81). There was a similar cross found at St. Catherine's monastery in Sinai (Weitzmann 1982, 87). Carved stucco crosses were also found at some churches in the Arabian Gulf region, such as Hira, southern Iraq, and al-Qusur at Failaka (Potts 1994, 62). It is unlikely that the cross of Jabal Berri is dated to before AD500 (Potts 1994, 63), because the Hira church dates to the 6th century AD and the al-Qusur dates to the 6th and 7th century AD.

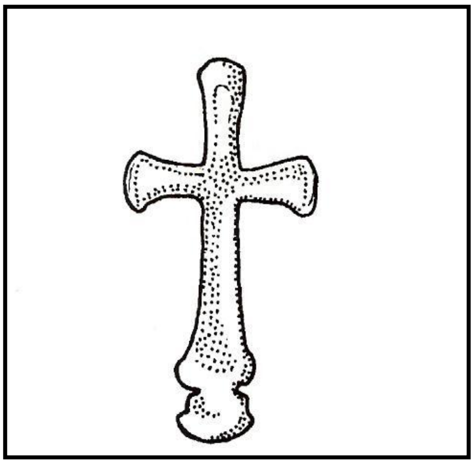


Figure 7.23. Drawing of the mother of pearl cross from Jabal Berri (Potts 1994, 63 – not to scale).

The second cross is made of mother of pearl (see Figure 7.23). It is approximately 5cm long and 2.6cm wide. The arms of the cross were about 0.7cm wide at each end and 0.4cm wide from the erected bar. This cross is similar to the engraved crosses, which were on the entrance sides (Potts 1994, 63). This may indicate that Jubayl and Jabal Berri were formed within the same or very similar societies.

Al-Hinnah (Village al-Hinnah)

Al-Hinnah is located 10km northeast of Thaj. This area is currently covered by green plants and wells. In 1979, a group of naturalists found a cross engraved on a large rectangular stone. They also found around five similar stones with crosses (see Figure 2.24). The crosses were similar to the Jubayl crosses. It is possibly that they were associated with Christian graves (Landfeldt 1994, 49)



Figure 7.24. Photograph showing tombstone inscribed with a cross from al-Hinnah (Landfeldt 1994, 52).

There is evidence for Christianity in the wider world of the Gulf. For instance, a fragment of pottery with a cross was found near the church of Thaj (Landfeldt 1994, 47). A glass with a cross was found in Tulul al-Ukhaidir, southern Iraq, and pottery with a stamped cross was found in Susa (Carter 2008, 99). A number of stelae were discovered in Bahrain which were Coptic (Bin Seray 1996, 326-7).

Churches similar to Kuwaiti churches

Despite of the poor preservation of the church at Akkaz, its plan parallels the al-Qusur and Sir Bani Yas churches (Carter 2008, 74). Both the churches at Ain Sha'ia and Kharg have enclosed walls with smaller structures in the corners; al-Qusur does not, however, have an enclosure wall (see Figure 7.25). The Ain Sha'ia, Kharg and al-Qusur churches are all different sizes; al-Qusur is the largest one and Ain Sha'ia is the smallest one (Okada 1992, 89).

Although their wall dimensions vary, all of the three churches have structural similarities. For instance, all have tripartite sanctuaries, rectangular recesses in some walls. The nave has three aisles with partitions. Furthermore, all the churches have a narthex annexed in the front. These rooms at al-Qusur and Kharg were probably used as a narthex (Orkada 1992, 89). That there are similarities in the ground-plans, and that the rectangular shape is utilised in varied dimensions, suggests a commonality in what people were expecting churches to look and function like (Okada 1992, 90).

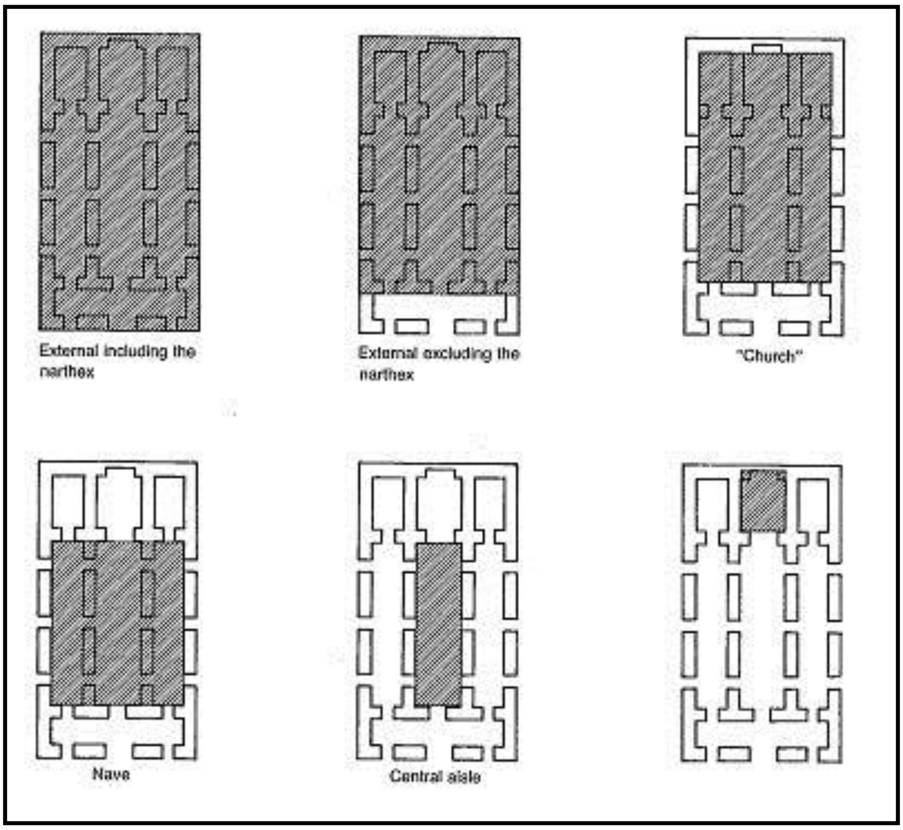


Figure 7.25. Schematic plan showing the structural formats followed by the Christian churches, highlighting the predominance of the rectangular shape (Orkada 1992, 89).

Rectangles \ Sites		Ain Sha'ia		Al-Qusur		Kharg	
		values	index	values	index	values	index
External including the narthex	L(m)	26.5	1	35.1	1.32	28.7	1.08
	W(m)	13.8	1	19.1	1.38	15.5	1.12
	L/W	1.92 (19:10)	.	1.84 (9:5)		1.85 (9:5)	
External excluding the narthex	L(m)	22.4	1	31.0	1.38	25.0	1.12
	W(m)	13.8	1	19.1	1.38	15.5	1.12
	L/W	1.62 (8:5)		1.62 (8:5)		1.61 (8:5)	
"Church"	L(m)	20.1	1	28.6	1.42	23.5	1.17
	W(m)	11.5	1	15.8	1.37	13.0	1.13
	L/W	1.75 (7:4)		1.81 (9:5)		1.81 (9:5)	
Nave	L(m)	14.5	1	19.0	1.31	15.5	1.07
	W(m)	11.5	1	15.9	1.38	13.0	1.13
	L/W	1.26 (5:4)		1.19 (6:5)		1.19 (6:5)	
Central aisle	L(m)	14.5	1	19.0	1.31	15.5	1.07
	W(m)	3.9	1	5.6	1.44	5.4	1.38
	L/W	3.72 (19:5)		3.39 (17:5)		2.87 (14:5)	
Choir	L(m)	5.6	1	7.5	1.34	7.2	1.29
	W(m)	3.9	1	5.6	1.44	5.4	1.38
	L/W	1.44 (7:5)		1.34 (4:3)		1.33 (4:3)	

Figure 7.26. Table highlighting the commonalities of dimensions within the churches (Okada 1994, 90).

Following the work of Okada (1994; see Figure 7.26) it is clear that all of the churches have similar designs and dimensions. We do not know, however, whether this is just a coincidence (Okada 1992, 91). Some have suggested that the similarities in the decorations of the churches at al-Qusur and Kharg reflect that they were from the same society. I believe this hypothesis is extremely exaggerated, and it is more likely that they just share the same religious affiliation and liturgical customs. If we look at the Muslim mosques over the world today, we will find most of them have a rectangular shape but this does not indicate that all of them form one society.

There are also other factors that can be compared between the three churches, such as the orientation of the sanctuary, the building materials, access and the built-in-tombs. For example, all of the three churches have a sanctuary directed to the east. As for the building materials, the walls in Ain Sha'ia and al-Qusur chuches were built of

mudbrick and covered by stucco; bricks were also used for their foundations. Kharg church is, however, different as it was built of stone (Okada 1992, 91). This may reflect the rocky mountains which are located opposite Kharg island. The main entrance of ‘Ain Sha’ia is from the southeast of a paved courtyard, while Kharg has entrances leading from three sides of the enclosure and the narthex has one in the front. Also the aisles have three doors. The al-Qusur church has a courtyard leading from the north and the west sides. Also the aisles have three doors. It should be noted that the three churches have aisles with three doorways in the same way (Okada 1992, 91). Moreover, at ‘Ain Sha’ia in the northern pavement, which is between the central, and the eastern aisles, a hole about 2.4 x 0.9m sounded by mudbrick and stucco was discovered. It was possibly built for a human grave that was later removed or robbed out (Okada 1989, 38-9), although there is little evidence to support this interpretation. A similar feature was also found at al-Qusur church A1 with the remains of human bones with shells, which were perhaps funeral placements and offerings. At the Kharg church, in the side aisle on the north of the nave a grave covered by stucco was found. It was higher than the floor level about 10.2cm; the grave contained the bones of four adults. These bones may represent relics of saints or martyrs (Orkada 1992, 91).

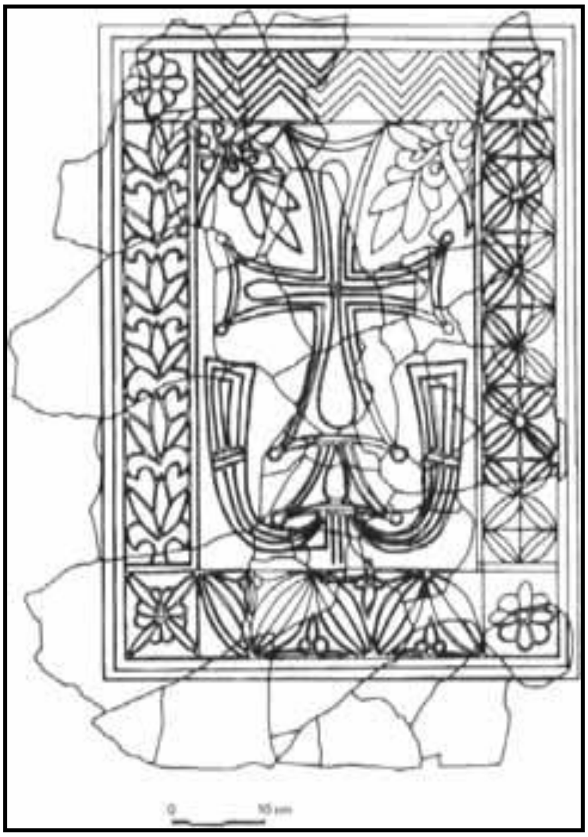


Figure 7.27. Illustration of a cross decoration at al-Qusur (Bernard et al. 1991, 161 – not to scale).

Crosses were discovered in the south side of the church A1 at al-Qusur (see Figure 7.27). In this illustration there is cross erected on the base which has two brackets going up. The small circles at the ends of cross arms of the base are similar to the Byzantine crosses (Bernard *et al*. 1991, 13). At the top there are floral decorations that contain five different formats: the first one is circular glass, and the second are palm leaves, the third are rosettes, the fourth one looks like dressed stone and the fifth are cut branches. All these elements of decoration were common in the East (Bernard *et al*. 1991, 13).

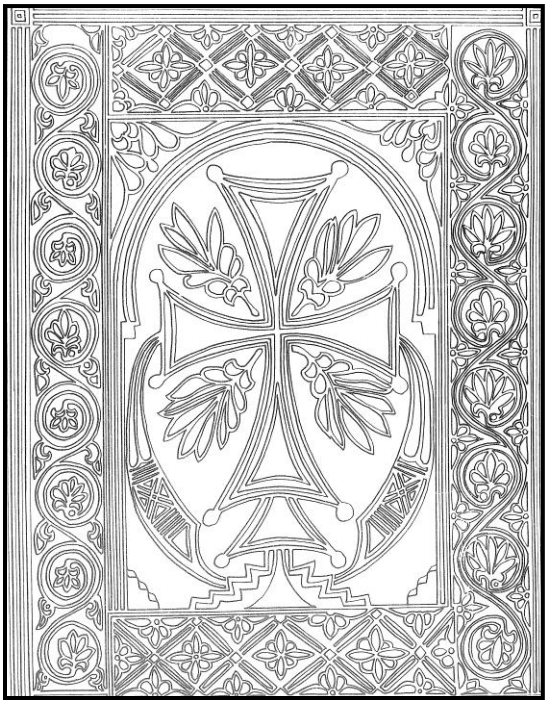


Figure 7.28. Illustration of a cross from al-Qusur (Bernard and Salles 1991, 10).

The cross at al-Qusur seems to be erected on what appears to be a stepped platform. The upper part of it is surrounded by a frieze, which contains vine leaves and rosettes (see Figure 7.28). This type of floral decoration is reminiscent of Hellenistic decoration found in the Mediterranean. Branches of leaves and vines were found in shrines located in Kharg Island. It dates the 2nd century AD or the beginning of the 3rd century AD (Bernard *et al*. 1991, 14). The vine is, however, also a Christian symbol, being employed in John 15:1, 'I am the true vine'. Bernard *et al*. (1991) stated that the patterning of the crosses can not give a precise date for the Church. For example, the decoration of the al-Qusur cross is very similar to a Khatchkar, which is an Armenian stone cross dated much later to the 8th or 10th century AD. Bernard *et al*. (1991) argued that there is no possibility that Failaka had contacts with Armenia at this time. This is probably overstated because Failaka Island had long-distance exchange networks through northern trade routes in the mainland which perhaps reached Armenia during the Hellenistic periods (see Chapter 6).

Many scholars, such as Potts (2003) and Fiey (1969) have agreed that the Nestorian churches in the Arabian Gulf date to the last part of the Sasanian period (AD224 - 637). This is perhaps because there are a lot of historical texts that mention the Nestorian churches in the region (Kennet 2007, 89). Simpson (2010) examined the archaeological remains, such as coins, stucco and pottery from the Arabian Gulf churches and similarly styled churches located in southern Mesopotamia, such as Ain Sha'ia and Hira. He concludes that all of them date from 8th to 9th century AD. This illustrates that there is no indication of the Sasanian period. Kennet (2007) reported that al-Qusur church A1 dates between the mid of the 8th to the early of the 9th century AD. He attributed this date to several reasons. For instance, there was no indication of Sasanian period or earlier material. Also there was no evidence of Samarra-horizon (a pottery typology) or later glazed pottery, which was common in the region at the beginning of the 9th century AD. Patitucci and Uggeri (1984) noted that al-Qusur has three sherds of glazed pottery with painted decoration, which were probably Samarra-horizon pottery. Also there was an evidence of eggshell pottery at al-Qusur. This may indicate that al-Qusur was possibly abandoned in the early of 9th century AD, just before Samarra-horizon become common in the region (Kennet 2007, 92). The carinated alkaline-glazed bowls that were found at al-Qusur and SBY-9 date between the 7th to 9th century AD. Patitucci and Uggeri (1984) reported that lots of objects at al-Qusur were found, but only one sherd of honeycomb pottery was probably related to Sasanian. Honeycomb pottery was common during the Sasanian period (Kennet 2007, 92). Bernard and Salles (1991) stated that the earliest levels of al-Qusur church were dated to the Sasanain period. There is, however, a lack of secure evidence to presume this date. For example, in the earliest level, which is Level I, there was no

eggshell and only one example of glazed bowl and one jar that they were assumed to be Sasanian – early Islamic. They suggested that this indicates the transitional period Sasano – early Islamic period, but they cite as evidence a parallel from Susa that was from the 9th century AD levels (Kennet 2007, 92). Therefore, most of the scant pottery evidence that is dated to the Sasanian period at al-Qusur is dubious or optimistic at best.

Analyses of human bones, which were found within the wall of the nave at al-Qusur church A1, shows a C14 date that calibrates to AD210 – 570 at 68.2% probability or AD1 – 700 at 95.4% probability. This person possibly died between the early of 3rd and the mid / late 6th century AD. Or perhaps he died in that time, but was reburied later within the church A1during the 8th century AD (Kennet 2007, 93). The Slovakian team analysed nine samples of glass from al-Qusur and the results indicate that they date from the 6th to 8th century AD (Benedikovà 2010, 151). C14 confirmed that al-Qusur was probably established during the Sasanian period. Also the historical texts mentioned that there were Christian societies in the Arabian Gulf in by the early 4th century AD, but the archaeological evidence to date provides a substantial lack evidence for the Sasanian period (Kennet 2007, 93). Potts (2003b) stated that the Sasanian occupation of the Eastern Arabian Peninsula was similar to the Ottoman conquest of the region in 20th century AD. They established military garrisons, which existed in relative isolation from most of the local society. Therefore, they did not engage with the local people and their influences and material trace were limited. Similar occurrences may illustrate the lack of the Sasanian activity at al-Qusur. It should be noted that al-Qusur is a huge site and excavations are not completed yet. Perhaps future work will provide new information. It should also be noted that the wall with narrow recesses, was a characteristic of the Sassanid architecture. So maybe

the al-Qusur church is related to the Sassanian architecture at some level (Bernard *et al*. 1991, 16). The A1 church may have been established after the A2 church, because its constructions appear to be later. For instance, the structures of the A1 church were higher than the ground level, which was contemporary with the A2 church (Callot 2008, 31-2). This may indicate that Christianity in Failaka existed before or during the Sasanian period.

The Pearl trade in the Arabian Gulf, extended from thousands of years ago to the 1920s (see Chapter 3). It was the one of the main export sources in the Gulf, until oil was discovered at which point it was mostly abandoned (al-Maidānī 2007, 7). The Christians were practising pearl trading during the 7th century AD. For example, the father of Job of Rev Ardashir was a trader of pearl and fine stone (Payne 2011, 105). Meshmahig (Muharrag an island off the north shore of main island of Bahrain), was well known as a source of pearls (Carter 2008 101). Also there is solid evidence that Christian societies were involved in pearl trade during the 6th century AD. The Patriarch Isho'yahb I (AD582 - 592) sent a letter to clarify with bishop Jacob of Dierin that the pearl fisher can work on Sunday (Bin Seray 1996, 326). According of the Chronicle of Seert, the Sasanian emperor Khosrau I (AD531 - 579), ordered bishop Ezekiel to drive a pearling journey on his behalf (Colless 1969 – 1970, 29; see also Carter 2008, 104).

There are several Syriac texts from the Church of the East indicating the existence of the Christians in the Arabian Gulf before Islam and during the early centuries of Islam. The Chronicle of Arbela is a text dated to the 6th century AD. It mentioned that there was a bishopric at Bayt Qatraya around AD224 (Potts 2003b, 1012).

Bayt Qatraya was located on the northeastern coast of the Arabian Gulf. It could be east Qatar, while Bayt Mazunaye was located in the Oman peninsula (Potts 2003b, 1020; Carter 2008, 99). These bishoprics followed the Metropolitan of Rev Ardashir (Bushihr in Iran), who was under the Catholicos in Seleucia-Ctesiphon (Potts 2003b, 1016). Through the biography of the life of Jonah, he established a monastery on the Black Island between AD343 and AD346 (Bin Seray 1996, 319-20; Carter 2008, 99).

It was mentioned in Vita Ionae (The Life of Jonah), which is a text describing a monk's life who was contemporaneous with Catholicos Barb'asemin (AD343 - 346), that the monastery of Rabban Thomas was at Bayt Qatraya (Hellyer 2001, 87; Potts 2003b, 1018). According to the Chronicle of Seert (AD295), there was a monk called Abdisho, who was contemporaneous with Patriach Thomarsa (AD363 – 371), who went to an island off Yamama and Bahrain named Ramath; he baptised its inhabitants and built a monastery on the island (Potts 2003b, 1019; Bin Seray 1996, 320). Bernard *et al*. (1991) noted that this monastery perhaps belonged to the Christian settlement at al-Qusur in Failaka Island. The synod of AD410 which was held in Seleucia-Ctesiphon by Patriarch Isaac, mentioned several bishoprics in the Arabian Gulf, such as Deirin on Tarut, and Meshmahig (see discussion below).

By the end of the 5th century AD, the Nestorian sources cease mentioning the Arabian Gulf bishops. This might be due to the powerful changes in the region. For instance, the weakness of the Lakhmid tribe led to the Kinda tribe becoming dominant in the region (Potts 2003b, 1021; see also Carter 2008, 100). This absence of the Arabian Gulf bishops in the Nestorian synods continued until AD676. The Hajar and Hatta bishops, who both were located opposite the Bahrain archipelago (see

discussion below), were mentioned in the synod of AD676; Bayt Mazunaye or mazun was mentioned also (Bin Seray 1996, 320).

In the mid 7th century AD, Bayt Qatraya tried to become independent from the authority of the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Isho'yahb III tried to solve the disputation between the two bishops by sending letters to all of them but he failed (Brok 1999, 86-7; Healey 2000, 229). The problem was resolved by George I who held a synod in AD676 at Deirin. This synod was attended by bishops of Deirin, Hajar and Hatta and Mazun (bin Seray 1996, 323).

The last indication of Bayt Qatraya in the Nestorian sources was from the synod of AD676. Thereafter there is no indication of Bayt Qatraya in the Nestorian sources, although the Christian societies still existed. For example, Michael the Syrian in the story of the scared fish highlighted the presence of Christian pearl fishermen near Bahrain around AD835 (Carter 2008, 100). Evidence for Christians in the Arabian Gulf becomes sparse after the 9th century AD, but it is likely that there were Christians who preferred to pay the Jizya (a per capita tax for non-Muslims), because they did not want to convert to Islam. Perhaps those who converted to Islam did so to avoid paying the Jizya. For example, in a different context, the Ottomans in the 17th and 18th century AD were recruiting the youth of a Sunni sect in Iraq to fight against the Safavids (Shia sect) in Iran. The Ottomans left those who were from the Shia sect. This resulted in some Sunni people claiming that they were from Shia sect in order to avoid recruitment (Öztuna, Y. 1988, 190).

7.1.2 Christian locations are mentioned in the Syraic text

Several Christian locations are mentioned in the Syraic text, such as Deirin, Ardia, Hajar, Hatta, Talun, Todro, Ruha, Meshmahig, Ramath, Bayt Qatraya, Mazun and the Black Island (see Figure 7.29).

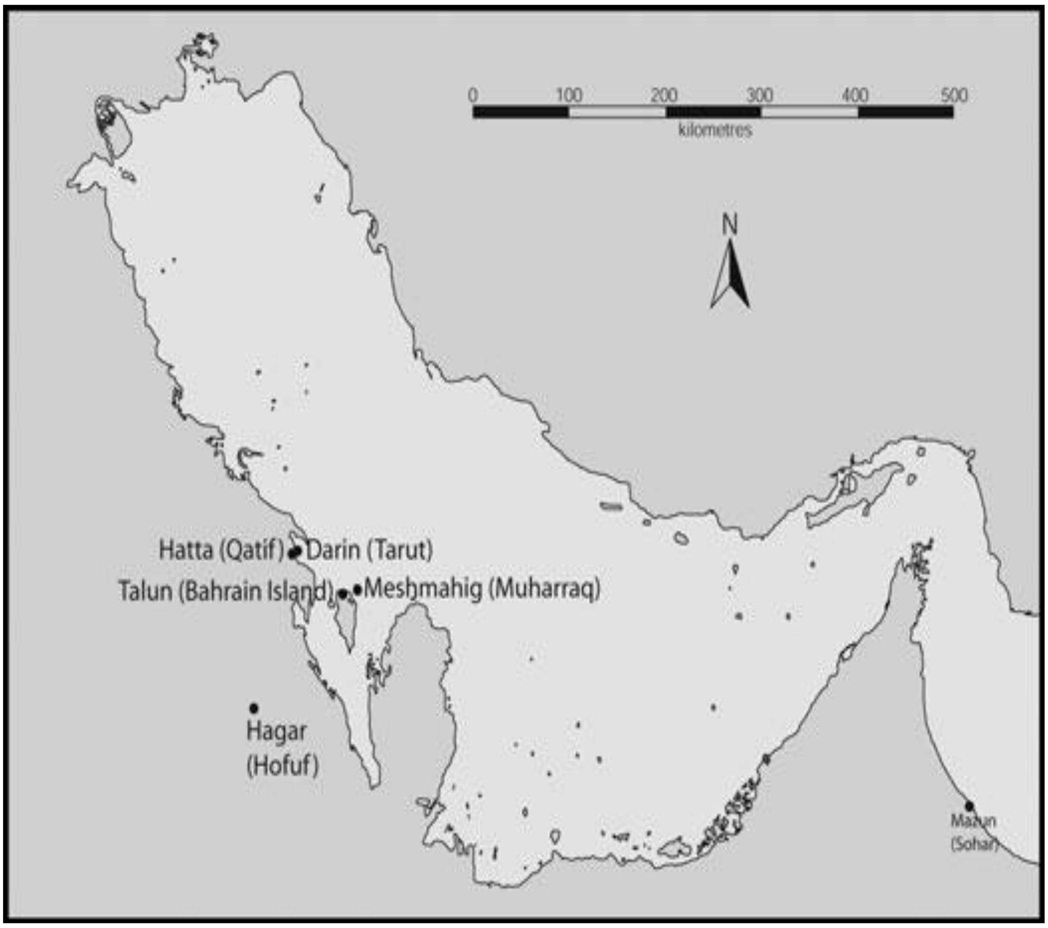


Figure 7.29. Map showing some Christian locations in the Gulf (Carter 2008, 72).

Deirin or (Dayrin, Diren, Daria)

This name is associated with the present village of Darin on Tarut Island, which is located on the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia opposite Qatif (Bin Seray 1996, 320; Carter 2008, 101; Bernard *et al.* 1991; Healey 2000, 234). In AD410, there is a suggestion that the bishop of Deirin attended the synod. Furthermore, Patriarch George I held synod at Deirin in AD676 and the bishop of Deirin attended. Jacob was

another bishop of Deirin who addressed 20 questions to the Patriarch Isho'yahb I (AD582 – 592; see Bin Seray 1996, 320-3; Carter 2008, 101).

Ardia

This name was identified as another spelling of Deirin (Bin Seray 1996, 320; Bernard *et al*. 1991, 24). It might be associated with ancient Ardos (Muharraq in Bahrain). Also it could be another name of Meshmahig or another Christian site on the island of Muharraq (Hellyer 2001, 88; Carter 2008, 101).

Hajar or Hagar

Several possibilities were mentioned for this name. It was probably used as another name of Bahrain (North eastern Arabia and Bahrain archipelago). It was also known as the capital of the Bahrain region (al- Hamāwī 1993, 392; al-Maqdisī 1991, 220). The Qarmatians (a Shi'a Ismaili group where lived in eastern Arabia during the 9th century AD) rebelled against the Abbasids in eastern Arabia, destroyed Hajar and established their new capital al-Hasā in AD899 (Nakhla1980, 23-81). Isaac, who was the bishop of Hajar, was mentioned in conjunction with the synod of Ezechiel in AD576 (Bin Seray 1996, 213). The Hajar bishop presented the synod at Deirin in AD676 (Healey 2000, 235; Bin Seray 1996, 213; see also Carter 2008, 101).

Hatta

Hatta has been interpreted as Qatif, which is located on the eastern coast of Arabia opposite Tarut Island. Hatta and Hajar were under the supervision of one bishop who attended the synod of Ezechiel in AD576, but in the synod of AD676, Hatta and Hajar had different bishops (Bin Seray 1996, 321; Healey 2000, 235).

Talun (Talon, Talwan)

Talun was mentioned in the Isho'yahb III letter during the disputation of the mid 7th century AD. It seems to have been a Christian society with monks. This name may refer to Tilmun, Dilmun and Tylos, which were ancient names associated with the main Island of Bahrain (Bin Seray 1997, 219; Bernard *et al*. 1991, 24; Healey 2000, 235; see also Chapter 5).

Todoro

This name is unidentified. It was perhaps the ancient name of Tarut (Bernard *et al*. 1991, 24; Bin Seray 1997, 212). The Deirin and Todoro bishop attended the synod of AD410 (Carter 2008, 102). Or possibly this name does not refer to Tarut which was identified as Deirin because both names were mentioned as different patriarchs having a single bishop.

Ruha

This name perhaps refers to the Bahrain archipelago (Bernard *et al*. 1989, 24). Talwan and Ruha were mentioned in the synod of AD676. Talwan was associated with Talon or Dilmun, the main island of Bahrain. Or Ruha was probably another Christian settlement on the main island of Bahrain (Hellyer 2000, 88; Carter 2008, 102).

Meshmahig

This name probably belonged to Muharraq, which is an Island located to the north of the main island of Bahrain (Bernard *et al*. 1991, 24; Carter 2008, 101). It was mentioned in the synod of AD410 and AD576 (Bin Seray 1996, 320-1). Muharraq is now locally known as Samahig. This name may derive from Meshmahig (Carter 2008, 101). There is a modern village called Dayr, which in Arabic means 'monastery'; however, no indication of any Christian site has been found in Muharraq (Healey 2000, 235; Hellyer 2001, 88; Carter 2008, 101).

Ramath

This name was mentioned in the Chronicle of Seert as an island off Yamama and Bahrain (Hellyer 2001, 88). It was possibly located in any area opposite the eastern coast of Arabia between Qatar and Kuwait (Bernard *et al*. 1991, 25). The monk Abdiso came to this island in the mid 4th century AD and he baptised its inhabitants. Then he established a monastery. Bernard (1991, 24) noted that Ramath is located 100km south of Abullah (Basra in Iraq) and he concluded that this is the distance between Basra and Failaka Island. Thus Ramath was probably the al-Qusur monastery at Failaka. Carter (2008, 101) stated that this island location has been mentioned as being 68 parsangs (408km) from Abullah. Potts (2003b, 1019-1020) noted that it could be located 300km further down the Arabian Gulf (see also Carter 2008, 101). This distance reaches Abu Ali Island, which is located in northern Jubayl.

Bayt Qatraya

This name was associated with the regions and the islands that were located in northern eastern Arabia (Bin Seray 1997, 211-2; Healey 2000, 226-7, 234). Bayt Qatraya was also indentified as ‘Isles’ which was an ecclesiastical province that stretched from Kuwait, eastern Saudi Arabia and Qatar (Hellyer 2001, 88). Bayt Qatraya bishops followed the metropolitan of Rev Ardashir (Bushihr in Iran), who were under the authority of the catholicos in Seleukia-Ctesiphon (Potts 2003b). A metropolitan, Thomas of Bayt Qatraya, was mentioned in the synod of AD676 (Carter 2008, 101). It is possible that the modern name of Qatar derived from Qatraye. This may indicate that Bayt Qatraya was located in the Qatar peninsula, but no evidence has been found relating to Christianity in Qatar yet.

Mazun (Bet Mazunaye)

This name belonged to either the Oman peninsula or a town in Oman, possibly Suhar. It was the place of an episcopate (Hellyer 2000, 88). Mazun also followed the metropolitan of Rev Ardashir. Its bishops attended synods of AD424, 544 and 676 (Bin Seray 1996, 320-1). It suggested that Mazun had a single bishop because it was probably not an extensive area. The border between Mazun and Bayt Qatraya is yet unidentified, but it was probably between Suhar and Qatar (King 1997, 233; Carter 2008, 101).

The Black Island

According to the biography of the monk Jonah, he established a monastery at the Black Island in the mid 4th century AD. This island might be located between Oman and Qatar (Bin Seray 1996, 319-20). Perhaps this island was Sir Bani Yas, which is located opposite the Abu Dhabi shore (Potts 1997, 67; see also Carter 2008, 102), but there have been no archaeological remains dating to the mid 4th century AD found on Sir Bani Yas Island so far. The islands of Ghagha and the Yasats, which are located to the west of Sir Bani Yas Island, could be the John monastery because there were several sites found dating to the 4th century AD (King and Tonghini 1998, 117-41; see also Hellyer 2000, 88; Carter 2008, 102).

Other names

There is a mention that the bishop of Sergius of Trihan attended the synod of AD676 at Deirin (Potts 2003b). Another name has been mentioned in Arabic sources, a church in the Abd al-Qays town of Juwatha, which is located in al-Hasā in eastern Arabia (Bin Seray 1996, 325).

7.2 Conclusion

The Christian presence in the east of the Arabian Peninsula was not just a temporary occurrence; Christian communities settled for a long time in this region. This is supported by the Syriac texts, which mention Christian societies in the synod of AD410 (Bin Seray 1996, 320-3). The Syriac texts illustrate location names, such as Deiren, Ramath and Meshmahig, which scholars have attributed to places in the east of the Arabian Peninsula, such as Bahrain and Tarut. The texts do not, however, mention Ikaros or Failaka Island where a monastery was discovered, demonstrating the existence of a Christian community. Did it have another name, such as as Ramath, as speculated by Bernard *et al*. (1991, 25)? It is unlikely that the Syriac texts would have ignored this community. Also the existence of a Christian society has been proved by the recent archeological discoveries in the Arabian Gulf, which reveal an important aspect of the political, social, religious and economic history of this region. It should be noted that investigation of some of these sites has not been completed, such as al-Qusur in Failaka Island. So perhaps future excavations will provide greater detail and resolution, which can clearly explain the Christian presence in Kuwait during the pre–Islamic period. Kuwait was not in isolation from its surrounded communities or regions during this period; instead influences and exchanges occurred before, after and during the Christian times.

7.3 Summary

In this chapter I considered why, how and when Christianity came into the Arabian Peninsula and later to the eastern Arabian peninsula. I presented the known Christian sites in Kuwait by discussing the archaeology of Christianity in the Arabian Gulf. In doing so, I illustrated the similarities of church design layouts within Kuwait and the surrounding regions. I argued for the date of the al-Qusur church as being existence during Sasanian period (AD224 - 637). I introduced the Christian economy in the Gulf; for instance at al-Qusur we have evidence for ceramics that are also found in Mesopotamia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates. I examined the Syriac texts that mention the Christian societies and locations in the Gulf. All this information confirms that Kuwait had relationships with its neighbours in the north and south of the Arabian Gulf. This occurrence of changing continuity will lead us to discuss another society and period in the next chapter which will be the Early Islamic period.

Chapter 8

8.1 The Islamic Periods in Kuwait

At the moment, we do not know exactly how Kuwait shifted from being Christian to Islamic; how this occurred will be a primary focus of this chapter. The previous chapter discussed the architecture and material culture of the known Christian sites in Kuwait. Over time, however, Christianity ceased to be the dominant religion in the region and was eventually replaced by Islam. This process was probably gradual, and operated in different speeds at different places as we shall see below. The commonalities between Christianity and Islam (e.g. the acknowledgment of a one true God), may have made the transition less jarring for people. This Chapter will focus on the Islamic periods in Kuwait to illustrate how the region continued to be an important link between the northern and southern parts of the Arabian Gulf. In the Islamic periods, Kuwait continued to be a significant trade centre in the northern Arabian Gulf, as it was located on the caravan trade routes linking the north with the south Arabian Gulf. It has been mentioned in many historical sources that in the early Islamic period, Kadhima (Kuwait), played an important role as a rest station for pilgrims, who came from Basra, Iraq, towards Mecca, and the trade centre. The archaeological finds found to date indicate an intensity of human activity in this area, and here I will discuss the most significant known tribes.

Although there is evidence for the middle Islamic period in other areas in the Gulf regions (e.g. Julfar, United Arab Emirates and Qala'at al-Bahrain, Bahrain), unfortunately there is not much known about it in Kuwait. There is a scarcity of sites that belong to this period (see conclusion). Of the late Islamic period, there are many indications that suggest that Kuwait had extensive relationships with other regions, whether in the Arabian Gulf or further away. This is suggested by the buildings and pottery found in the late Islamic sites. For instance, in Qatar there is a fort that is similar in plan to al-Zur, which was called Freiha fort. Such similarity of building style with the two forts, supports the historical texts (e.g. al-Thani 2007), and indicates that they were both built or commissioned by members of the Utub tribe. Freiha fort was built by the Utub tribe in the second half of the 17^{th} century AD; this tribe established modern Kuwait (see Chapter 2). When the Utub tribe settled in Qatar in the 17^{th} century AD, they built this fort (al-Thani 2007).

I will introduce the early Islamic sites in Kuwait and question whether Akkaz and al-Qusur experienced Christian occupation or whether we can detect a shift towards Islam. I will illustrate why Kadhima was an important early Islamic site in Kuwait, and assess if the archaeology matches or contradicts the historic sources. I will introduce the late Islamic sites in Kuwait and discuss in detail both the Sa'ida Village and the al-Zur fort, which are currently the only late Islamic sites excavated.

I will discuss how the pottery in both sites reflects connections with the other areas. I will demonstrate through the materials some of the activities practised. I will illustrate why the forts in Kuwait are similar to others in the Gulf region (see above). The chapter will conclude with an extended discussion regarding the lack of the middle Islamic sites in Kuwait and propose solutions.

The Islamic periods in the Arabian Gulf have been divided into three: the first phase begins with the establishment of Umayyad control (initially in Damascus) until the Seljuq occupation of Baghdad (AD700 - 1055); the second period runs from around AD1055 to the Portuguese control of the Arabian Gulf in AD1524 (al-Mutairi 2010, 29-30); the third period is from AD1524 to the end of 18^{th} century AD (Larsen 1983, 271; Whitecomb 1975, 125-6; al-Mutairi 2010, 30). There are several early Islamic sites in the modern State of Kuwait, such as Kadhima (the original Kuwait), Wadi al-Batin south Nos. 2 and 4, Wadi al-Batin No. 3, Wadi al-Batin north No. 1, Umm al-Aish No. 1, Umm al-Rimam and Site No. SB-106. Most of these sites were not excavated. Only Kadhima was excavated by two archaeological missions (e.g. the Kuwaiti and British missions).

8.1.1 The Early Islamic sites

B. Frohlich from the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C, visited Kuwait in 1987 and surveyed the northern areas (see Figure 8.1). He found several Islamic sites (Frohlich 1987, 1). Unfortunately, most of them have subsequently been damaged by the military and they are not reachable because they are located within restricted areas.

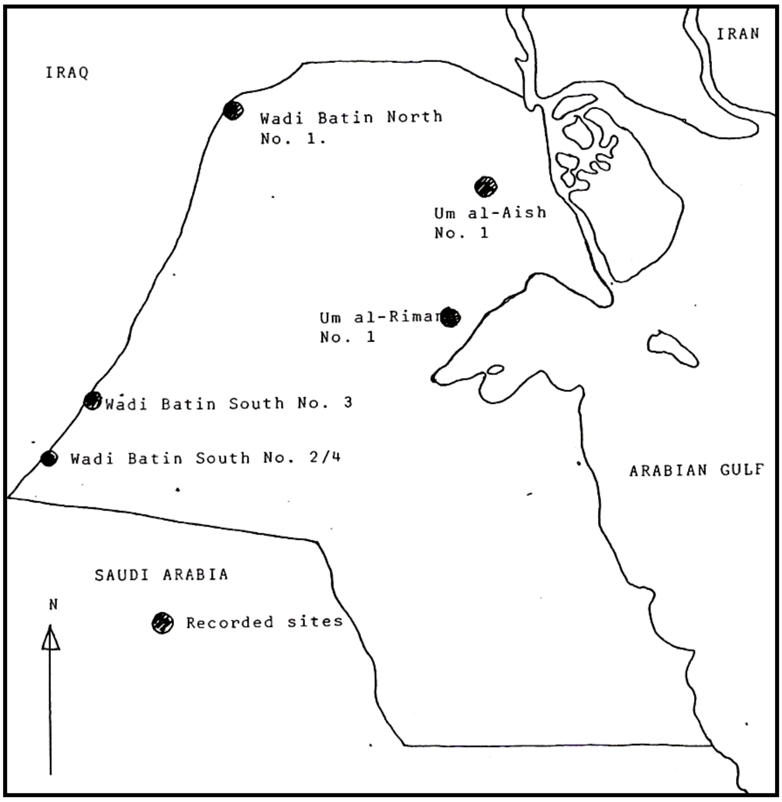


Figure 8.1. Frohlich's survey in the State of Kuwait (Frohlich 1987, 6; not to scale).

Wadi al-Batin is located in the northern part of Kuwait. This area was mentioned in some of the historical sources as having an ancient river that passed through it from the south to the north. Three sites were discovered which contained pottery, fragments of glass and basic buildings. Al-Najjar (1987) suggests that this indicates a commercial centre as it is located on the trade route between Iraq, the Arabian Gulf, and the pilgrims' road from Iraq to Mecca (see Figure 8.10 below). This sites dates to the Islamic Abbasid period AD750 - 1258 (al-Najjar 1987, 323-324).

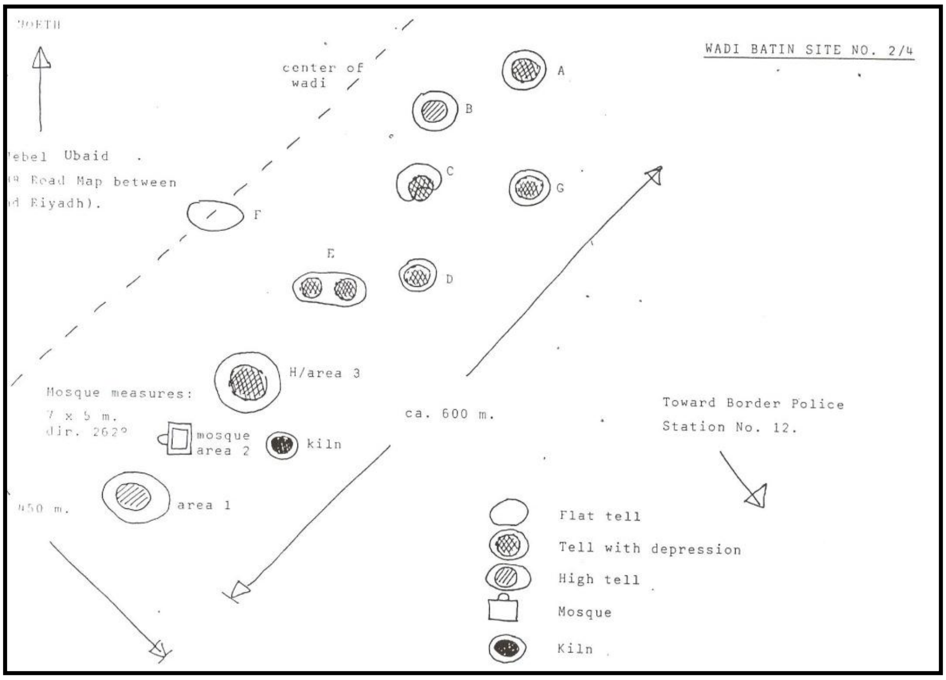


Figure 8.2. Showing Wadi al-Batin south Nos. 2 – 4 (Schematic drawing by Frohlich 1987, 11; not to scale).

Wadi al-Batin south Nos. 2 and 4

This site is found on the border between Kuwait and Iraq. It has approximately 10 hills and the foundations of a small mosque (see Figure 8.2). All of the structures have Islamic archaeological remains, such as glass fragments, shards of pottery and steatite. Frohlich (1987) gave this site two numbers (e.g. Nos. 2 and 4) because he surveyed the site twice in the same month, but the hills essentially belong to same one site. During the archaeological survey of these hills, they found the remains of a small mosque, some specific depressions in the middle of the hill, some walls, stone constructions, water pipes made of pottery and an area with a tanūr (oven). The area of the site extended from 25 to 150m and 3m high.

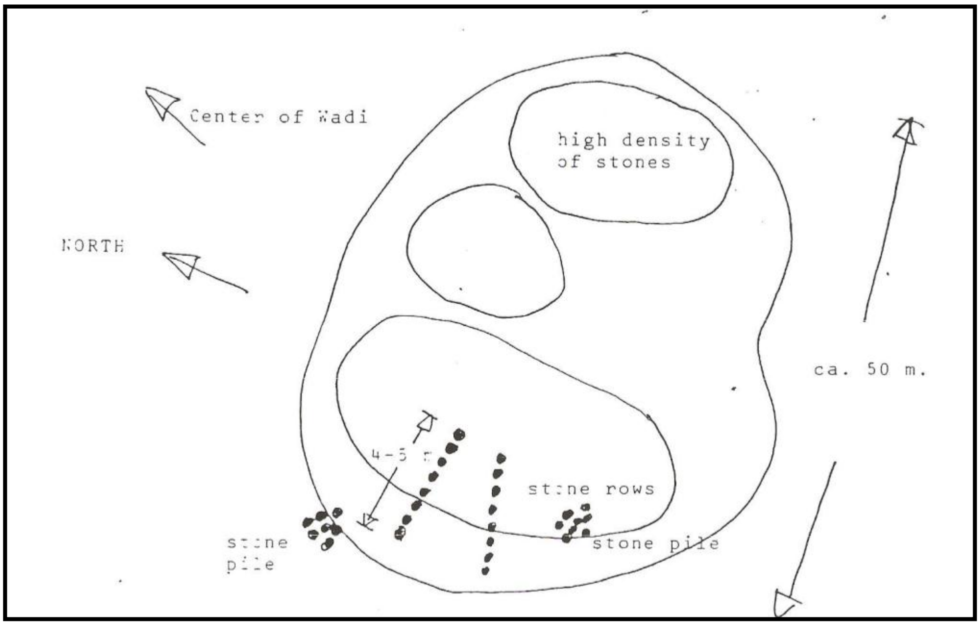


Figure 8.3. Wadi al-Batin south No. 3 (Schematic drawing by Frohlich 1987, 14).

Wadi al-Batin south No.3

This site is located in the middle of the Wadi al-Batin about 15km northeast of Wadi al-Batin south Nos. 1 and 2. It is smaller than the previous site, but it has a larger quantity of pottery, glass and bitumen (see Figure 8.3). This site covers an area about 40 x 50m and is about 1.25m high. There were three hills which were linked to each other. The northern hill has a large amount of naturally occuring stones, while the southwest hill has two parallel rows of stones. This site dates to the early Islamic period. (Frohlich 1987, 14).

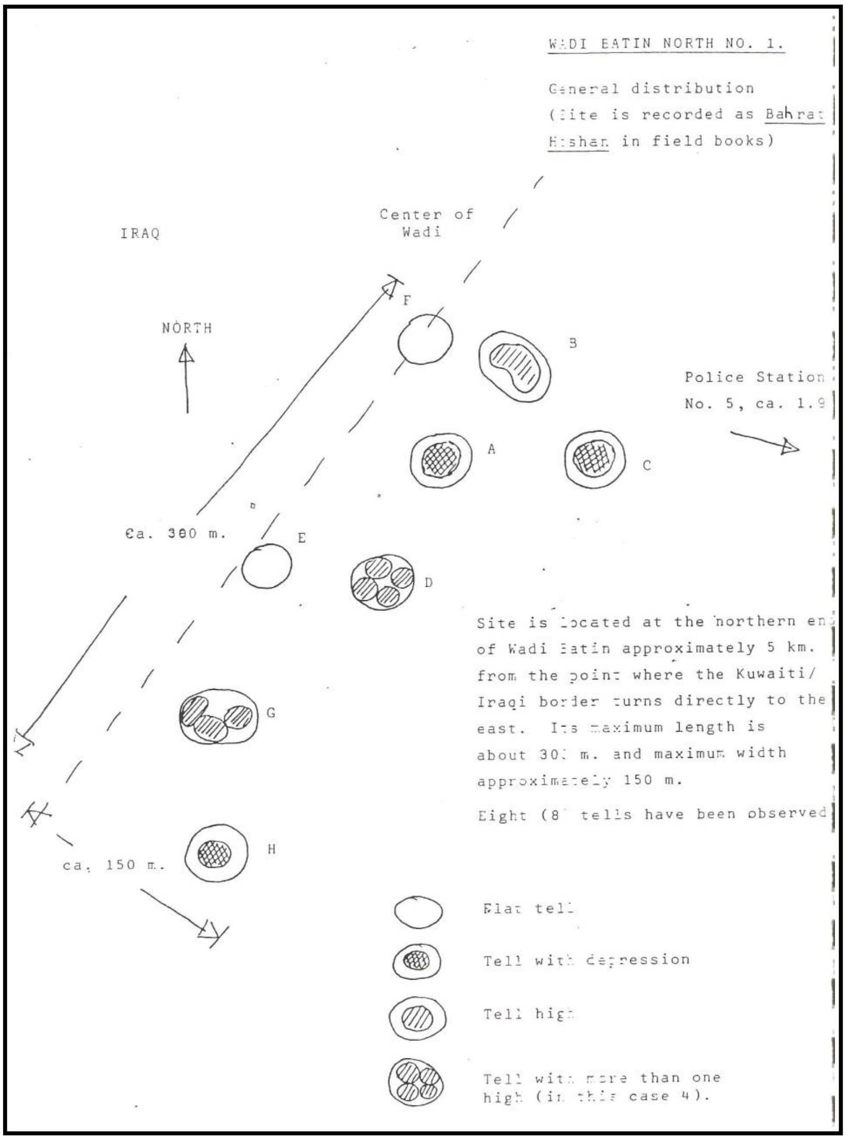


Figure 8.4. Wadi al-Batin north No. 1 (Schematic drawing by Frohlich 1987, 17).

Wadi al-Batin nourth No. 1

This site is located about 5km from the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border. This site has eight hills (see Figure 8.4), which have been given letters the A, B, C. and so on. Hill D was composed of four hills linked to each other. Hill B has a water pipe made of pottery with a diameter of 0.35m and 2.2m long. There were two parallel stone walls and one stone wall in the south of the hill. In the northeast of the hill there was a semi-circular stone wall. They were probably used as a cistern. The site area was

approximately 300 – 350m and 150m wide and 4m high. This site dates to the early Islamic period (Frohlich 1987, 14).

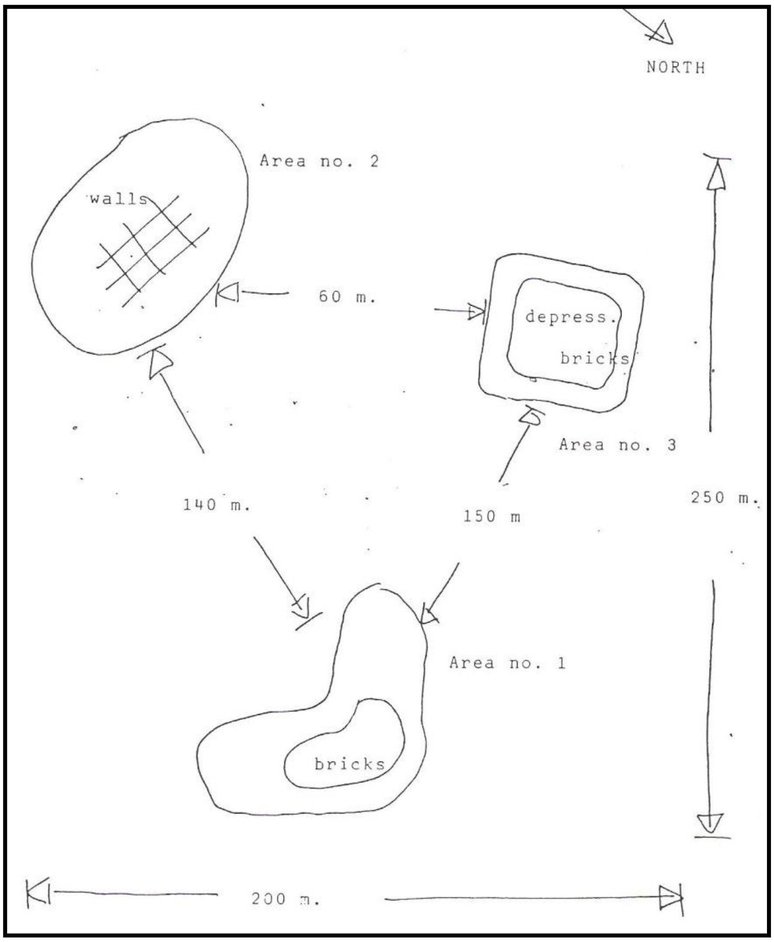


Figure 8.5. Umm al-Aish site No. 1 (Schematic drawing by Frohlich 1987, 21).

Umm al-Aish No. 1

This site has three hills situated within an area about 200 x 250m². Area 1 was a hill about 28 x 38m. Found was a large amount of red brick and fragments of pottery (see Figure 8.5). After survey, it is estimated that the site of Area 1 was originally 18 x 19m. Area 2 was a hill approximately 70 x 90m and 2.5m high. It contained fragments of pottery and some wall foundations. Area 3 was a structure measuring about 7.5 x 8m², surrounded by a hill, which was about 17 x 19m; it has a deep depression in the

middle. From the pottery typology this site is dated to the early Islamic period (Frohlich 1987, 20).

Umm al-Rimam

Umm al-Rimam is a large low area about 20m high and 4km in diameter – the centre parts are made up of salt deposits. They found fragments of pottery on three sites, which were given site numbers 1, 2, and 3. The oldest finds were from site No. 2, while site No. 1 has the largest number of fragments of glazed pottery which have green and blue colours. At site No. 3, there was found a handle of pottery. It should be noted that there were no structures found in this area. This site dates to the early Islamic period (Frohlich 1987, 25). To date, there has been no analysis of the pottery, and it is uncertain whether it is local or imported pottery or clay.

Site No. SB-106

This site is located in the Sabbiyah area in northern Kuwait; specifically in an area called Ras al-Sabbiyah, which is near the sea. It was discovered in 2010. The area of this settlement was about 50 x 90m. Six sites were found at this settlement. Site No. 1: it is a rectangular structure, probably the foundations of a room (see Figure 8.6), being built of mud and stones. There was also another structure discovered close to this room, possibly a courtyard. Site 1 measures about 5 x 10m (al-Mutairi 2011c, 20).

Site No. 2 is about 8 x 12m. At this site was found a large quantity of shells spread on the eastern most parts of the site (near the coast). It was probably a workshop (see Figure 8.7). There was a similar accumulation of shells found at the Ubaid site known as H3 (see Chapter 3). This may indicate that this specific location was used successfully to work shellfish for over a thousand years. Site No. 3 comprises the foundations of a rectangular mud and stone building built about 2.60 ×

6m. The sites No. 4 and 5 also contained an accumulation of shells. They were similar to Site 2. They were probably other workshops. At Site No. 6 structures foundations were found built of stone and mud measuring about 6 x 11m. On the surface were the remains of broken pottery (al-Mutairi 2011c, 20).

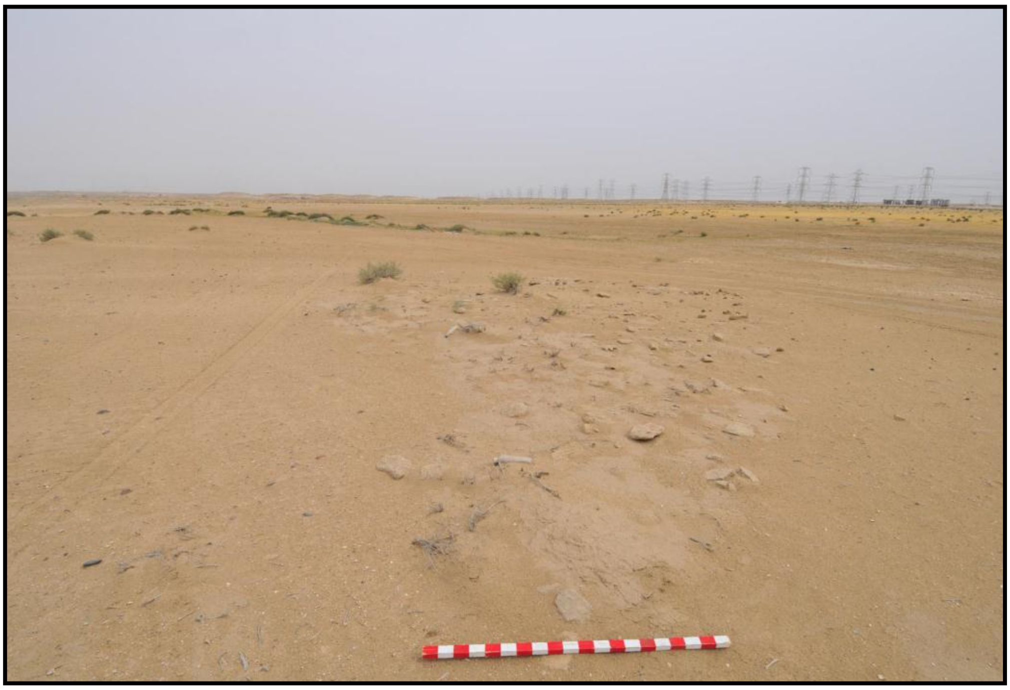


Figure 8.6. Showing the structure of site No. 2 at SB-106 settlement (al-Mutairi 2011c, 41).

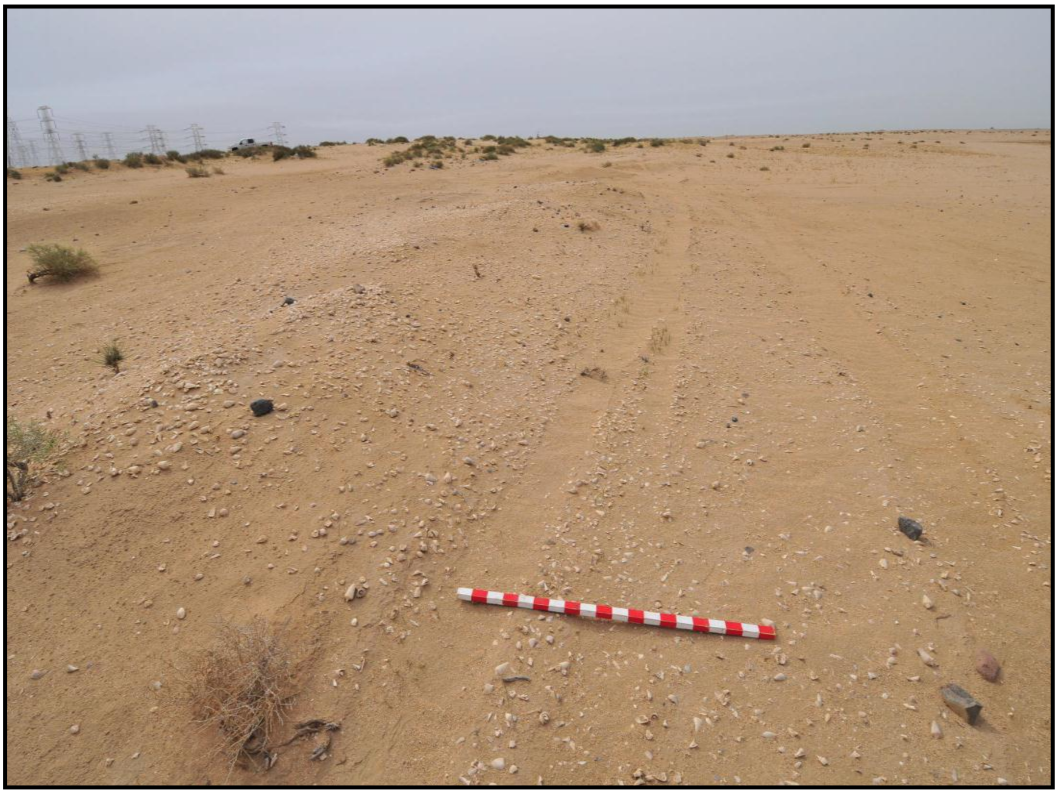


Figure 8.7. Photograph showing the spread of shells in site No.2 at SB-106 settlement (al-Mutairi 2011c, 41).

Through the preliminary study of this settlement it seems probable that it was a seasonal camp on the coast which was built of local materials, such as stone and sand. The structures were scattered on the area. This may indicate that this site was mostly used by fishermen rather than farmers. Fragments of vessels, jars and glass of blue and green colours were found (see Figure 8.8). They are comparable with other pottery in the region, which date to the early Islamic period. (al-Mutairi 2011c, 20). The site dates to the early Islamic period. It appears from the archaeological remains that the economy of this site may have relied on the sea due to the large quantity of shells, indicating that they were probably used for food or for creating other objects (e.g. ornaments). Exchange may also have occurred, but it is difficult to prove at the moment due to the lack of excavation. Also found were flints which perhaps were used to open the shells (al-Mutairi 2011c, 20).

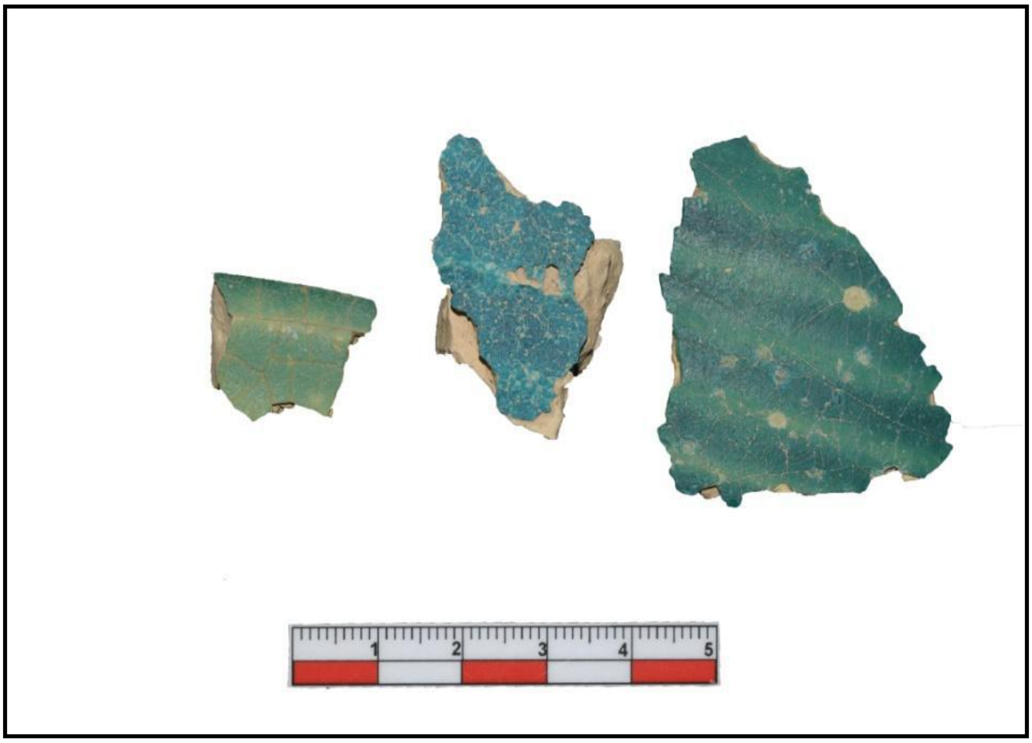


Figure 8.8. Photograph showing fragments of jars found at SB-106 (al-Mutairi 2011c, 42).

Akkaz Island

Akkaz Island is traditionally one of the Kuwaiti islands but more recently it has become part of the port of Shuwiakh (Salem 2007, 14; also see Chapter 7). During the excavation of Akkaz particularly at level 2, Islamic pottery and about 15 Islamic coins were found (see Chapter 7). For example, a single coin which reads 'la ilaha illa Allah' there is no god except Allah. On the frame it is written that this coin was issued in al-Salam (Baghdad) in AH157 (AD773). In the centre is written 'Muhammad is the messenger of Allah'. Around the edges of the obverse face, it is written, 'Besm Allah' (the name of the god), which was ordered by Abdullah Amir al-Mūminīn (prince of faithful people). From the inscription text we can tell that this coin belonged to the second Caliph of the Abbasid dynasty, Abu Jā'fer al-Mansūr Abdullah ibn Muhammad (AH136-158, which is AD753 – 773).

Al-Qusur

It is locally known as ‘palaces’, and it is a famous archaeological site located in the centre of Failaka Island. The entire area of al-Qusur covers about 2 x 2.6km. It is bordered by marshes to the east and the west. The easiest route to the shore is from the north and the south. It has both Christian and Islamic archaeological remains (see Chapter 7). Akkaz and al-Qusur probably survived as a Christian settlement as a result of good relations between Muslims and Christians, especially during the early Islamic centuries. This is potentially supported by the discovery of Islamic objects within Christian sites. For example, the Islamic coins, which were found at Akkaz Island, were probably used by Christians in Akkaz. It is possible that they abandoned these sites after the majority converted to Islam, or because they needed to emigrate to another place, due to maybe changing political or social pressures. There was no evidence for deliberate damage at al-Qusur churches (see Chapter 7).

Thomas (1989) suggests that during the early centuries of Islam (AD700 - 1000), Christians integrated freely within the Umayyad and Abbasid communities. There is lots of evidence for periods of good relations with the local Muslim rulers (Carter 2008, 105). Colless (1969) stated that the missionary activities of the Church of the East reached its apogee during the late of 8th and early 9th century AD, under the Patriarchate of Timothy (AD780 - 823). Furthermore, the canons shown that some Christians held important positions under Muslim rulers, such as tax collectors and ministers, such as the Sarjoun, who was minister in Damascus for the Umayyads (AD 661-750; Carter 2008, 105). In the earliest era of their rule, the Sarjouns organized the Umayyads' diwans (the ministries) (Shami 2009, 6). In the Abbasid period (AD749 - 1258), Patriarch Timothy was friends with Caliph al-Mahdi (AD775 - 785), and he was close to the court of Caliph Harūn al-Rashīd (AD786 - 809), who had several

influential Christian friends at the Abbaisd court (Young 1974, 134-5; Carter 2008, 106). In addition, during the rule of Caliph Harūn al-Rashīd, Christians were allowed to restore their churches, such as the Church of the Virgin in Jerusalem (Shami 2009, 10). Moreover, Christians still maintained their positions in the several learned fields, such as science, administration, medicine, philosophy and music (Shami 2009, 10). For instance, Bayt al-Hikma (the house of wisdom), which was built during the reign of Caliph al-Ma'mūn (AD830 - 833) was completely staffed by Christians, who translated philosophical and other texts from Greek and Syriac into Arabic (Shami 2009, 24; Baumer 2006, 157; Carter 2008, 106). This suggests that the Christians represented a vibrant and thriving community during the early centuries of Islam.

8.1.2 Kadhima

Kadhima in the early Islamic texts

Several early Islamic textual sources mention and describe Kadhima as a well-known trade centre between the north and the south Arabian Peninsula. These include, al-Hamāwī who died in the 7th century AD, as well as al-Hamdānī, al-Tabarī, al-Bakrī, Ibn Khurdādhbih, al-Asfahānī and Abu al-Fida (see Chapter 2; see also al-Duweesh 2005, 13-4). Kadhima probably belonged to a settlement, which had many wells, and a large coastal region called Kadhimat al-Buhūr (al-Hamdānī 1993, 108). It was mentioned in Arabic poetry as Kawadhīm, which is the plural of Kadhima (al-Tabarī 1993, 12, 17). The precise location of Kadhima is still debated (see discussions below). Some of the textual sources suggest that its location was on a trade route, which was called al- Munkadir route (al-Bakrī (1998), although al-Harbī (1969, 673-4) argues that al-Munkadir route did not head to Kadhima directly, but instead had a smaller branch line leading to Kadhima (see also Ibn Rustih 1967, 180; Kennet *et al*. 2011, 161).

It was mentioned by al-Hamāwī (1993, 489) that Kadhima was located along the route between Basra, in Iraq, and Bahrain (see Chapter 7). Furthermore, Kadhima was mentioned as a station on the postal route between southern and northern Arabia (Ibn Khurdādhbih 1999, 151). It was also described as a place that has lots of wells and pastured areas (al-Duweesh 2005, 13; al-Bakrī 1998, 1109). It is recorded that there was a very important battle between the Muslims and Persians termed the Dhāt al-Salāsil battle, or Kadhima Day, which took place near at Kadhima in AD633 (al-Duweesh 2005, 22-3). Al-Shaybānī, who was killed at the Battle of al-Qadisiya AD636 between Arab Muslims and Sasanian Persians, narrated that he heard of the new prophet (Muhammad) when he was grazing his camels at Kadhima (al-Jaser 1979, 1505; see also al-Duweesh 2005, 20). Lorimer (1970) proposed that Kadhima belongs to the area of land located between Kuwait Bay and Jal al-Zur Mountains (see Chapter 2).

Possible locations of Kadhima

More recently, it has been suggested that Kadhima was located on the western part of Kuwait Bay (see Figure 8.9). The proposed site is bordered to the south by the sea, to the east by the Kuwait National Park, to the west by an area called al-Kuwaikib, and to the north by the highlands of the Jal al-Zur Mountains (see also Chapter 2) and the military ranges. Kadhima is located approximately 14km northeast of al-Jahra (al-Duweesh 2005, 12). The advantages of this proposition is that it begins to draw upon archaeological evidence; although as discussed below, it is still not conclusive.



Figure 8.9 A map showing Kadhima, which is study area (Kennet *et al*. 2011, 162).

Historically, Kadhima was located on the trade routes between Basra (southern Iraq) and Mecca. There were several trade routes passing through this area, such as the sea trade route, al-Munkadir route and Kadhima- al-Yamamah (al-Duweesh 2005, 16).

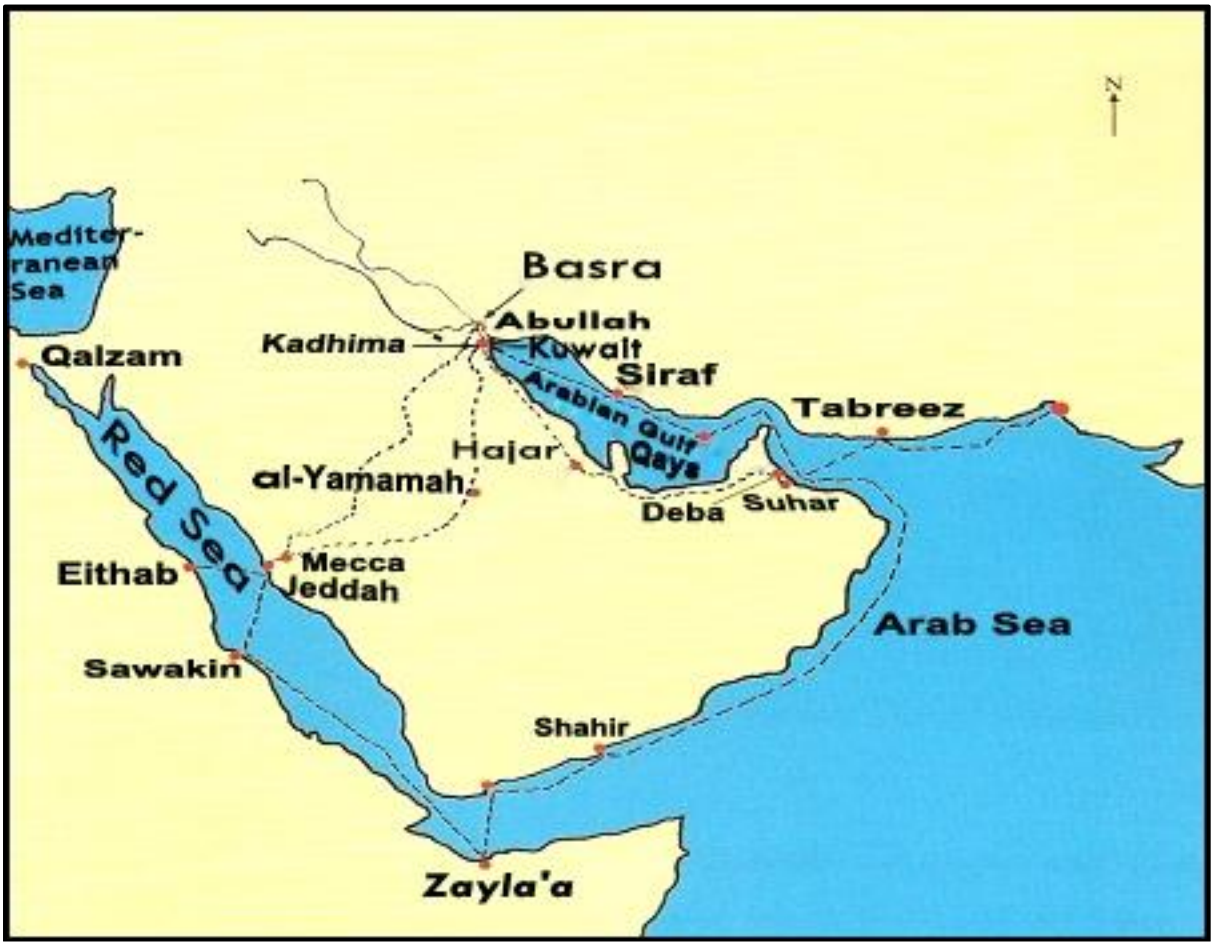


Figure 8.10. Map showing Kadhima as a trade centre, with its possible trade routes (al-Duweesh 2005, 64).

Basra (Abullah) -Mecca (the pilgrim route)

This route is long, arduous, risky and hazardous – this route is known historically from the Darb Zubayda in the 7th century AD (see Figure 8.10). It begins in Basra and heads towards Mecca passing several stations, such as al-Manjashyah, al-Hufair, al-Shajy and al-Kharja, which are all located in the northern parts of Kuwait. (al-Hashimī 2003, 51-60). After this came stations such as al-Hafār (Hafār al-Batin northeast Saudi Arabia), al-Nebaj (in the middle of Saudi Arabia), and al-Judailah, which was a break station for the Basra and Kadhima pilgrims (al-Sabah 2003, 59; see also al-Duweesh 2005, 17).

The route then continues and passes several stations to reach Mecca. Out of all the known routes, this one is most likely to take ones life, if misfortune is encountered.

The sea route

This route started from Basra, and proceeds to go by Abadan (northwest Iran), Kadhima, Hajar coast (see Chapter 7), Qatar, Dibba (northeast United Arab Emirates) and Suhar (southern coast of Sultanate of Oman; see Ibn Khurdādhbih 1999, 204; see also al-Duweesh 2005, 16). With the right type of sailing vessel, this journey is relatively hazard free, and pleasant.

The al- Munkadir land route

Ibn Khurdādhbih (1999) reported that this route extended between Basra and Kadhima with a small stop-off station between them. It was probably at Umm al-Aiash, which is located in northern Kuwait between Kadhima and Basra (al-Duwessh 2005, 16). This part of the route, relatively speaking, is an easier journey than some of the others, in terms of distance and terrain (firm open plains as opposed to rock or loose sand).

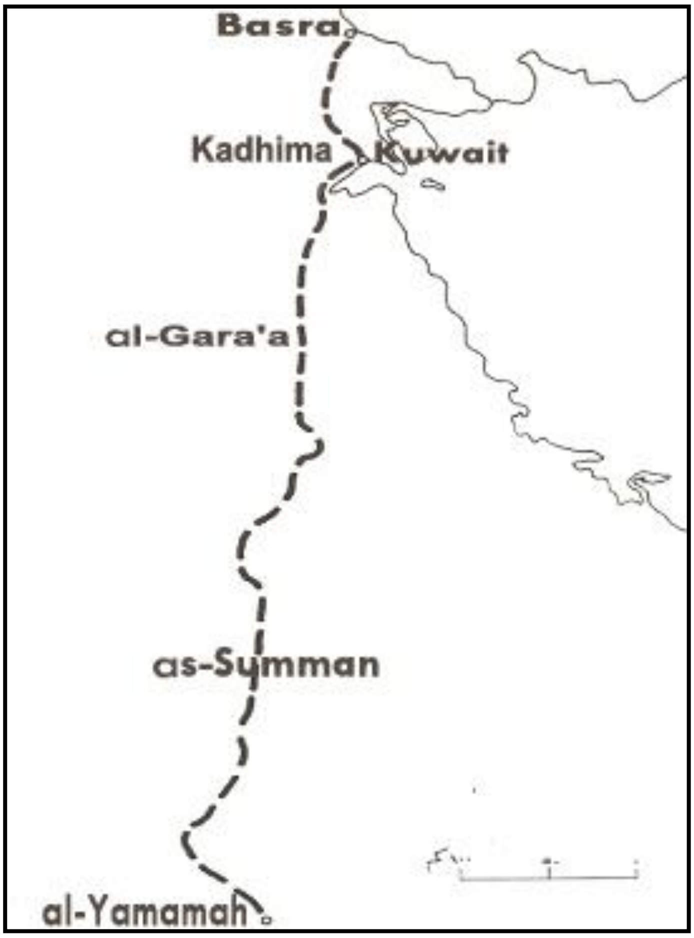


Figure 8.11. Map showing the Kadhima to al-Yamamah route (al-Duweesh 2005, 65).

Kadhima to al-Yamamah route

This route was between Kadhima and al-Yamamah, which is located in east Najd in the middle of Saudi Arabia. It passes several stations, such as al-Gara'a and as-Summan, in Saudi Arabia (see Figure 8.11; al-Duweesh 2005, 16-7). This route is even today potentially hazardous, as it traverses open desert. As such, it is very easy to get lost – in the desert this can often result in death.

The Arabic tribes in Kadhima

Several Arab tribes were settled in Kadhima during the 5th, 6th and 7th century AD, such as, the Azd, Tanūkh, Abd al-Qays and Baker Bin Wā‘il. al-Duweesh (2005) suggests that the Azd tribe settled in the Bahrain region (see Chapter 7). He cited verses of poetry that mention that the Azd tribe lived at the al-Mushaghar fortress, which is located in the al-Hasā province in eastern Saudi Arabia. He reported that Kadhima was located within Bahrain, which was controlled by the Azd.

The Tanūkh tribe

This tribe left Yemen around 145BC and eventually settled in Bahrain region (see Chapter 7) Kadhima was part of this region. Little is recorded about their influence here, other than that they immigrated to the Euphrates area, after the Abd al-Qays tribe took control of the region (al-Bakrī 1977, 152; see also al-Duweesh 2005, 18).

Abd al-Qays tribe

This tribe controlled the Bahrain region and played an active role in converting other tribes to Christianity (see Chapter 7). It had several tribal branches; one of them were the Banu Shan, who lived in Kadhima (al-Jasir 1979, 50; see also al-Duweesh 2005, 19).

The Baker Bin Wā‘il tribe

al-Hamdānī (1974) reported that the Baker Bin Wā‘il region extended from al-Yamamah, Bahrain, Kadhima to Basra (al-Duweesh 2005, 19). Malah Village, which belonged to this tribe, is located in southern Kuwait and it still has the same name today (al-Duweesh 2005, 19). The Baker Bin Wā‘il (pagan and Christian) left Kadhima after the Abd al-Qays tribe who were mostly Christian at this time took control. Here, we probably have more a social power struggle, rather than just religious differences. Baker Bin Wā‘il also has several branches; one of them is the

Banu Shaybān who lived in Kadhima. Al-Bakrī (1997) noted that Kadhima was a water-well which belonged to Banu Shaybān (al-Duweesh 2005, 20).

The Banu Tamīm tribe

Banu Tamīm was well known as an eloquent tribe in Arabia before and during the early Islamic periods. This tribe was spread in Najd and the Hijaz, the Eastern Arabian Peninsula. For example, they were settled in Kuwait; and collected their water from Kadhima (al-Duweesh 2005, 20). They settled in several areas in southern Kuwait, such as al-Saidan and the Warah Mountain (al-Bakrī 1945, 87-8).

The Kadhima economy

Kadhima was a trade centre due to its location on the routes between the north and south of the Arabian Peninsula. As it was located on the northern coast of the Arabian Gulf, many of Kadhima's inhabitants were involved in fishing and pearl tradering, which has been practised in the Arabian Gulf for thousands of years (see Chapter 3 and 7). Many historical texts, such as al-Bakrī 1998, al-Hamdānī 1974 and al-Asfahānī 1967 have mentioned that Kadhima was a good place to pasture camels. Several archaeological surveys have been carried out in northern Kuwait, such as the Danish mission in 1958 (Glob 2003, 168), the Johns Hopkins mission in 1972 (Carter 1972, 14) and the Antiquity Department from 1972 to 2004, but they did not find anything relating to Kadhima (al-Duweesh 2005, 29). In 2002, however, the Kuwaiti archaeological team discovered some structures in Kadhima (see below).

The Kadhima settlement

Kadhima is located on hills which are approximately 2m high and about 2km from the coast. The land is characterised by solid ground containing limestone: there is no sedimentary clay. There is a waterway between these hills formed by rain from the eastern side. From the east, between the site and the sea, there is a Sabkha (salt flat), perhaps indicating that the sea extended up to the site, but receded thousands of years ago (see Chapter 5). On the surface of the Sabkha there is vegetation and shifting sand (al-Duweesh 2005, 30; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 3).

The Kuwaiti team has divided the site into seven sections with letters A, B, C , and so on (see Figure 8.12).

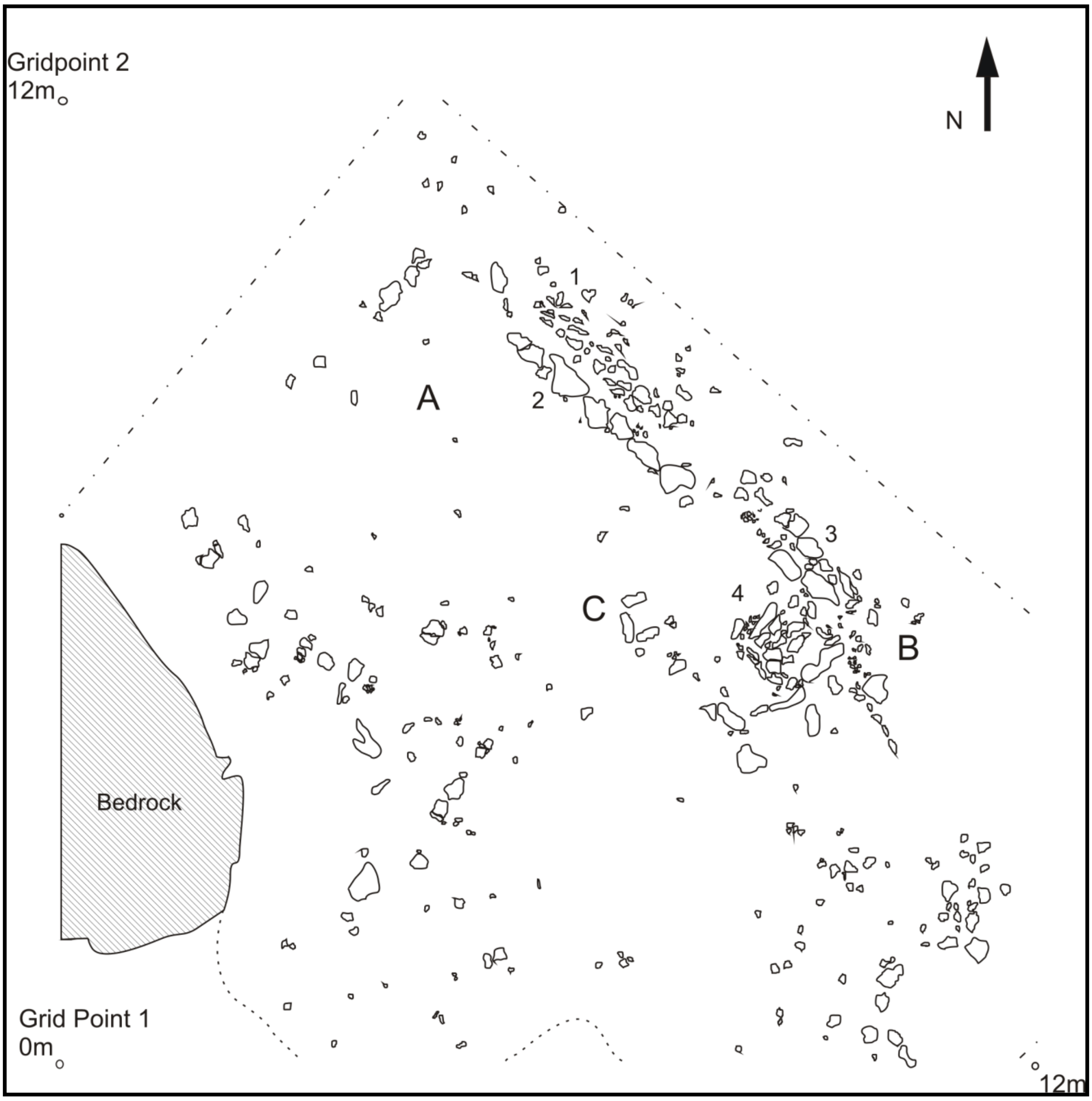


Figure 8.12. Plan of Area ABC (Skinner and Fitton 2010, 187).

Area A

This area is the main hill, and the first area to be investigated. It contains three rectangular rooms whose walls were built of natural limestone and rocks that were scattered around the site (see Figure 8.13). Sand covered the walls. Only one side of the stones was available for inspection as the other stones had collapsed. The first room was rectangularly shaped and had foundations created by large stones.

It is oriented from the north to the south. It was accessed from the east. It was about 3.10m long, 2.60m wide and about 0.25m high. The second room is also rectangular, being about than 4m long and 3m wide. The third room was difficult to measure because most of its walls were gone. The walls at this hill may indicate that there was a large house (al-Duweesh 2005, 31; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 4; Kennet *et al*. 2011, 164-6).



Figure 8.13. Photograph showing the remains of a room at Area A in Kadhima (al-Mutairi 2011c, 30).

Area B

This area is on the second largest hill on the site. It is located to the northeast of the main hill and it starts declining from the east side and is covered by soft sand. On the top of the hill there were large structural foundations, with the eastern part being clearer than the western part. There was a thick wall on this hill about 0.40m wide. At

the end of this wall from the south, there were collapsed rocks toward the north. The whole structure of this area was about 7.30m wide and about 5.10m long. It was probably a large room (see Figure 8.14). There were also foundations of a small square room found to the south of this room, and another room to the east (al-Duweesh 2005, 31-2; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 4-5; Kennet *et al*. 2011, 164-6).



Figure 8.14 210. Photograph showing a room on the Area B at Kadihma (al-Mutairi 2011c, 30).

Area C

This hill is located between Area A and Area B. In the middle of the hill, there were rocks and pottery fragments spread on the surface. In the centre of this hill there were structures measuring about 9m long and 6m wide. There was an indication of walls covered by sand in the east (al-Duweesh 2005, 32; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 5; Kennet *et al*. 2011, 164-6).

Area D

This area is located in the eastern part of the site. Here, a well was found, and some structures which were probably rooms. One of them was approximately 3m long and 2.60m wide and the other was about 2.70m long and 2.50m wide. Modern materials found near the head of the well suggest that it was used until recent times. Al-Duweesh (2005) believed that this well was probably the main source of water for the inhabitants of Kadhima (al-Duweesh 2005, 32; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 5).

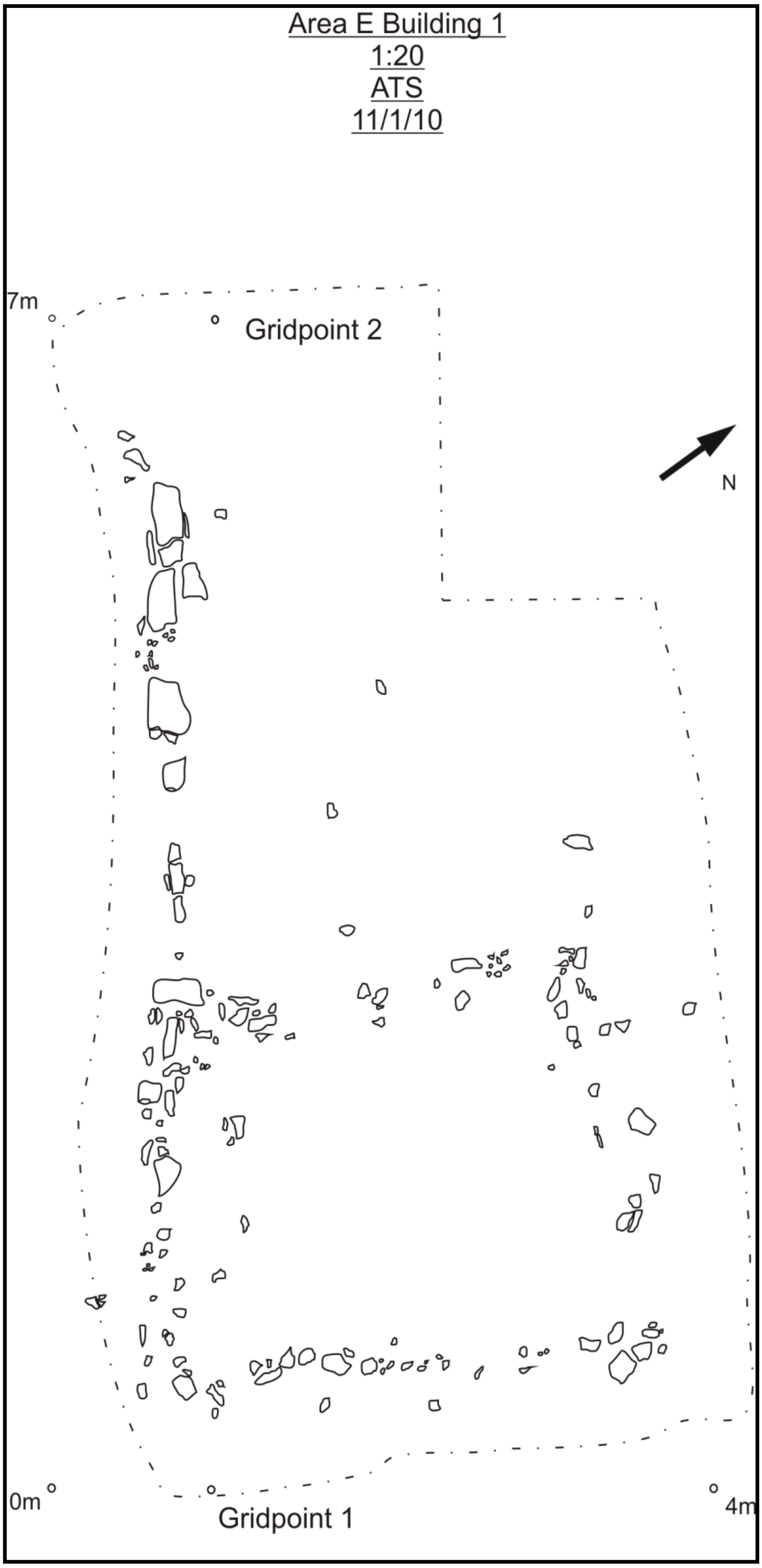


Figure 8.15. Showing the plan of Area E (Skinner and Fitton 2010, 194).

Area E

This area is located to the south of the main hill. It is one of the largest hills in Kadhima. There was a waterway between this hill and the main hill. It has four rooms (see Figures 8.15 and 8.16). Room 1 is rectangular; its northern wall was about 2.50m long and the western wall about 3m. The walls were about 20 - 30cm thick (al-Duweesh 2005, 33). Room 2 is also rectangularly shaped and its northern wall was about 3.20m long while the eastern wall was about 2.80m. The eastern wall has a door about 1m wide (al-Duweesh 2005, 33; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 5). Room 3 is rectangular in plan. It was about 3.20m long and 3.10m wide with a wall thickness of about 55cm. Room 4 is also rectangular in shape. Its northern wall was about 3.50m long while the western wall was about 3.20m long. The wall thickness was about 30 – 40cm. This room has a door about 1m from the east (al-Duweesh 2005, 33; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 6).



Figure 8.16. Showing the excavations at Area E in Kadhima (al-Mutairi 2011c, 31).

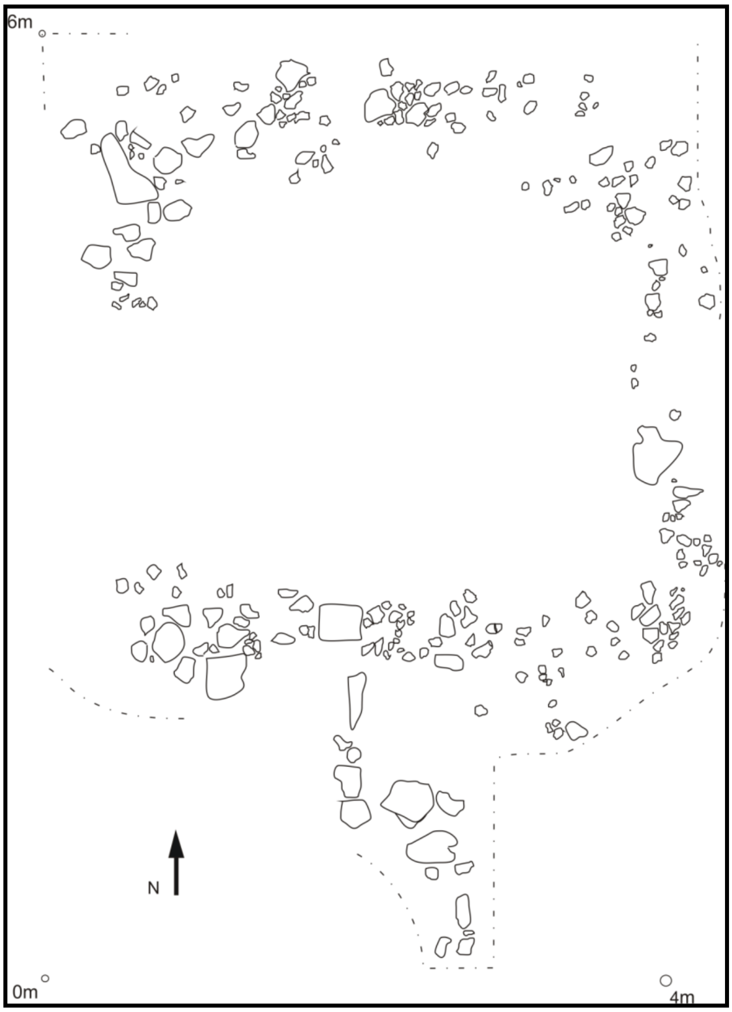


Figure 8.17. Plan of room in area F (Skinner and Fitton 2010, 191).

Area F

This area is located about 800m north of the site near the National Park. The structures extend to inside the National Park. It has rectilinear rooms and there was glazed pottery scattered on the site surface (see Figure 8.17). This area was probably damaged when the government excavated the foundations for the perimeter fence that surrounds the National Park (al-Duweesh 2005, 34; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 6).

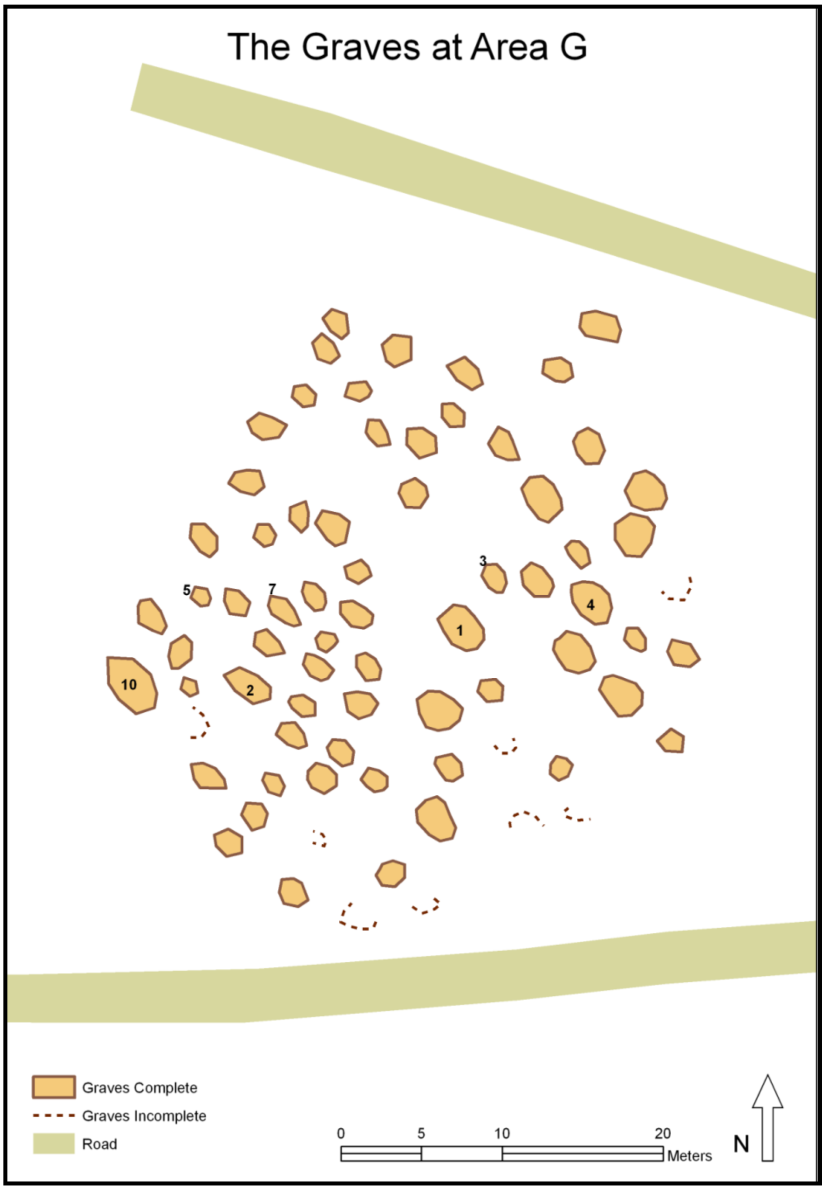


Figure 8.18. Area G graves (Skinner and Fitton 2010, 200).

Area G

This area is located about 70m north of the main hill. It has small and large oval structures. The first one was about 2.20m long and 1.50m wide. The second was about 2.70m long and 1.60m wide. The last one was about 2.70m long and 1.60m wide. In the eastern side there was low land containing some circular stones that probably formed a well (al-Duweesh 2005, 34; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 6). From the western side of the site, there were number of tombstones (see Figure 8.18).

These tombstones cover an area of about 1200m². From its orientation they were probably for Muslims as all of them were facing the west (towards Mecca), and Muslims bury their dead to face Mecca. Each tombstone was about 1.70m. It is likely that they belonged to the Muslims who died in the Dhāt al-Salāsil, battle between the Muslims and the Persians in AD633 (al-Duweesh 2005, 34-5; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 6).

Finds

There were many archaeological remains found on the surface of Kadhima, such as unglazed pottery, glazed pottery, steatite, glass and Islamic coins. I will briefly introduce some to the objects here, and then discuss others in more detail later.

Unglazed pottery

This type was sparse at the site. Perhaps the inhabitants preferred using glazed pottery. I will choose two of them as examples:

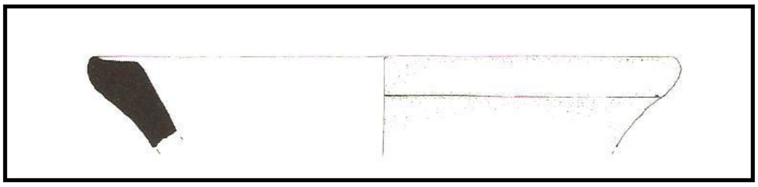


Figure 8.19. Fragment of a large rim found at Kadhima (al-Duweesh 2005, 53; not to scale).

KK/B 5

It is a fragment of a large jar rim (see Figure 8.19). Its clay has a green colour. It was solid and well fired. It was about 1cm thick and its diameter was about 36 – 46cm (al-Duweesh 2005, 37; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 6).

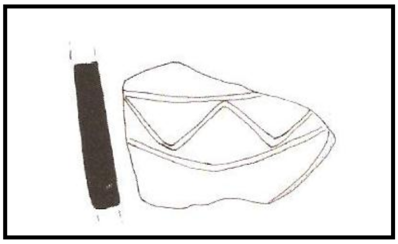


Figure 8.20 Fragment of a vessel body found at Kadhima (al-Duweesh 2005, 53; not to scale).

KK/B6

It is a fragment of a vessel body (see Figure 8.20). Its clay has a red colour. It is about 0.7cm thick. It is solid and mixed with soft sand. It is well fired. It has deep grooves which are two parallel lines at the top and two other parallel at the bottom. There are zigzag lines between them. This type dates to the early Islamic period (al-Duweesh 2005, 37; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 6-7).

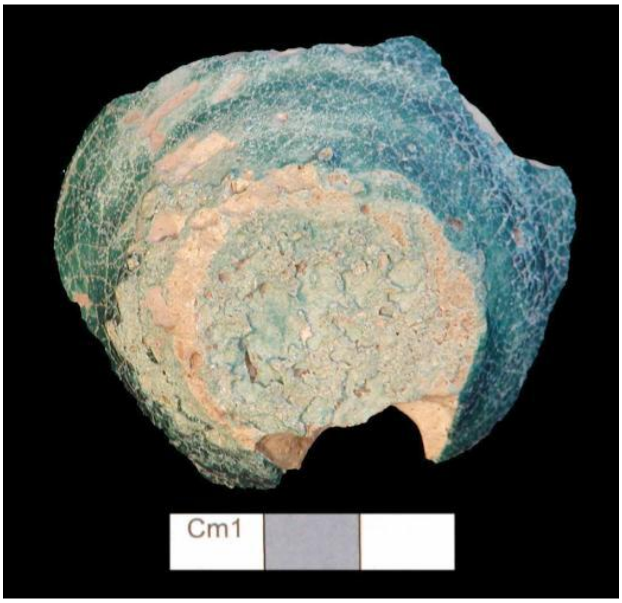


Figure 8.21. Showing a piece of glazed pottery found on Kadhima (al-Mutairi 2011c, 32).

Glazed pottery

This type of pottery was found in Kadhima in large numbers (see Figure 8.21) constituting about 80% of the pottery found. There were bowls and cups of this type found. Bowls were painted black inside and several were bright blue near the rim. The outsides were painted bright or dark green and sometimes dark blue (al-Duweesh 2005, 38; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 7). Similar pottery was found in Akkaz, al-Qusur, SB-106 in Kuwait, and at Murwab in Qatar. This site dates to the early Islamic period, 8th century AD (Abdul-Aziz 2009, 250). The trade between India and the Arabian Gulf flourished during the early Islamic centuries, especially in the 8th and 9th century AD. Areas in the Arabian Gulf during these centuries are known to have imported weapons, spices, silk and incense from India, whilst exporting pearls, Arabian horses, frankincense, myrrh and rose water (e.g. Shaker 2003, 156; al-Samir 1977, 14; al-Alūsī 1984, 82; Shehab 2011, 1-2).

Such goods were transferred via the land and sea trade routes of the Arabian Gulf (see Figure 8.10 above). The glazed pottery which is found in several sites

belonging to the early Islamic period in the Arabian Gulf, such as Basra and Samarra in Iraq, Susa in Iran, al-Qusur, Akkaz, Kadhima and SB-106 in Kuwait and Murwab in Qatar, reflects the trade exchanged between these areas (Guérin 2010, 18). Perhaps Kuwait at that time was a key trade centre, being not only located on the overland caravan route but also the maritime ones, as suggested by al-Qusur, on Failaka Island and Akkaz Island. Therefore, the goods that came from the southern Gulf, such as Murwab, Qatar, which exported textiles, horses and pearls (al-Hamāwī 1993, 493), passed through the stations of Kuwait and headed north to Basra and other cities such as Samarra in Iraq. A sea route may have operated from Kuwait to Basra and Susa in Iran. Note that Samarra and Susa were well known as a ceramic production centres in the early Islamic periods (Shahin 2003, 13), and Basra was well known for producing dates (*Phoenix dactylifera*) (al-Quzwaini 1969, 312).

There was some glazed pottery found which was dark green. Some of these pieces have prominent grooves at the bottom. These were compared with Akkaz and Wadi al-Batin pottery. They date to the early Abbasid period (AD750 - 1517; al-Duweesh 2005, 38-9; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 7). They include the following three pieces:

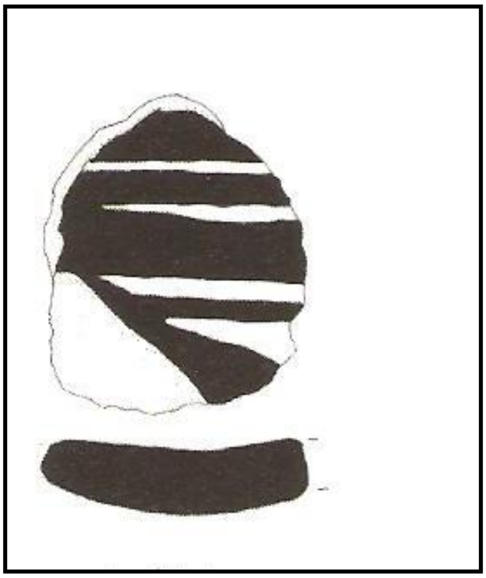


Figure 8.22. A complete fragment of a vessel base found at Kadhima (al-Duweesh 2005, 53; not to scale).

KK/C2 Complete fragment of a vessel base (see Figure 8.22). Its clay is yellow. It was coated by dark blue on the outside, and there were black lines. Its base diameter was about 2.90cm (al-Duweesh 2005, 39).

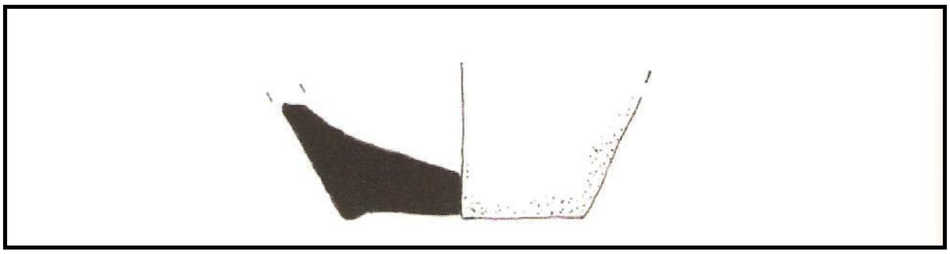


Figure 8.23. A fragment of a bowl base found at Kadhima (al-Duweesh 2005, 53).

KK/B3

Fragment of a bowl base (see Figure 8.23), green on the outside, with the inside stained black by a substance that is likely to be bitumen. The base diameter was about 6cm (al-Duweesh 2005, 39; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 7).

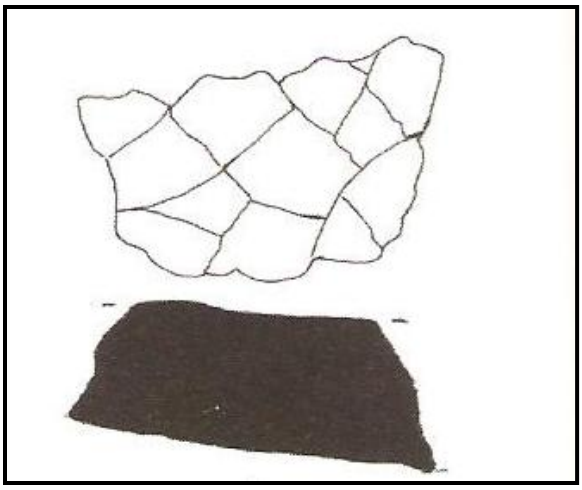


Figure 8.24. A fragment of a vessel body found at Kadhima (al-Duweesh 2005, 53)

KK/B4

Fragment of a vessel body about 1.2cm thick. Its clay is a greenish colour (see Figure 8.24). It is painted black on the inside and has grooves of turtle shell (al-Duweesh 2005, 39; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 8). As there has been no analysis of the pottery, it is difficult to determine if it is a local or imported pottery.

Glass

Many different coloured un-decorated glass fragments were found which probably came from bowls, beads, bracelets and bottles. Similar pieces were found in Darab Zubayda and Basra (southern Iraq) and in Suhar in Oman. (al-Duweesh 2005, 41; al-Duweesh and al-Mutairi 2002, 8). This may indicate that there were connections between these areas. This may have been achieved by the pilgrims who came from different regions when heading to Mecca, passing through cities and stations, which were established for resting, such Kadhima and al-Yamamah. Such interactions could have facilitated the not only the exchange of information and ideas, but also goods

and gifts. This process still occurs to this day, as some people go to Mecca to sell goods and to pray.

Islamic Coins

Islamic coins were found in Kadhima, such as the Umayyad (AD662 - 750) and Mamluk (AD1250 - 1517) coins (see Figure 8.25).



Figure 8.25. Showing several Islamic coins found in Kadhima (al-Mutairi 2011c, 32).

The Umayyad coin is dedicated to Hisham bin Abdul Malek (AD 724 - 743), and was made of copper. Its diameter was about 2cm and its weight was about 1.85gm. On the face of this coin written in the centre is ‘la ilaha illa Allah’ (there is no god except Allah). There is nothing on the frame. The reverse has written in the centre, ‘Mohammed Rasul Allah’ (Muhammad is the messenger of Allah). The frame

has the name of Allah. This coin was issued in AH123 (al-Duweesh 2005, 42). This is the only Umayyad coin so far found in Kuwait. The Mamluk coin was compared with other Mamluk coins and it was similar to az-Zāhir Timurbughā coins (AD1467 – 1468). It was made of copper. Its face was unclear but the reverse has a hexagram shape, which has a flower with a hexagonal shape. Six coins were found, one of them was issued in Baghdad but the others are not clear (al-Duweesh 2005, 42-3).

Through the pottery, glass and coins, which were found at Kadhima, it can be suggested that this site was settled during the 8th century AD and possibly already in the 7th century AD. The absence Kadhima of Samarra Horizon ware, which started spreading in the Gulf region at the beginning of the 9th century AD, demonstrates that this site was abandoned at the early of the 9th century AD (Kennet *et al*. 2011, 167). The British team surveyed what they thought was Kadhima and its surrounding area in 2009/2010. It was discovered that the site was surrounded by lots of structures, pottery scatters and shell fragments. It is currently uncertain from the archaeology if we are seeing permanent, or seasonal occupation (Kennet *et al.* 2011, 168-70). In the historical sources Kadhima is described as a city located near the sea; it had a fort, buildings and traders (see Chapter 2; al-Asfahānī 1967, 320-1). al-Nabhan (2008) noted that the term of Kadhima applied not to the small area known today, but instead extended to the surrounding areas as far as al-Jahra. In addition, al-Bisher (1966) stated that Kadhima included the whole area from the sea to al-Jahra. Al-Ghunaim (1995) reported that Kadhima extended east and west of the current site. Furthermore, al-Shahir (2012) stated that Kadhima was in fact al-Jahra, which is located on the trade routes between Basra and southern and western Arabia (al-Farhan 2008, 30). It is possible that Kadhima is al-Jahra, which has a fort and wells. The al-Jahra fort (al-Qasr al-Ahmar) was built in 1897, probably on the ancient foundations of Kadhima

fort. Unfortunately, al-Jahra has not been subject to any intensive archaeological enquiry yet.

The Late Islamic period in Kuwait

Most the Late Islamic sites in Kuwait are located at Failaka Island (see Figure 8.26).

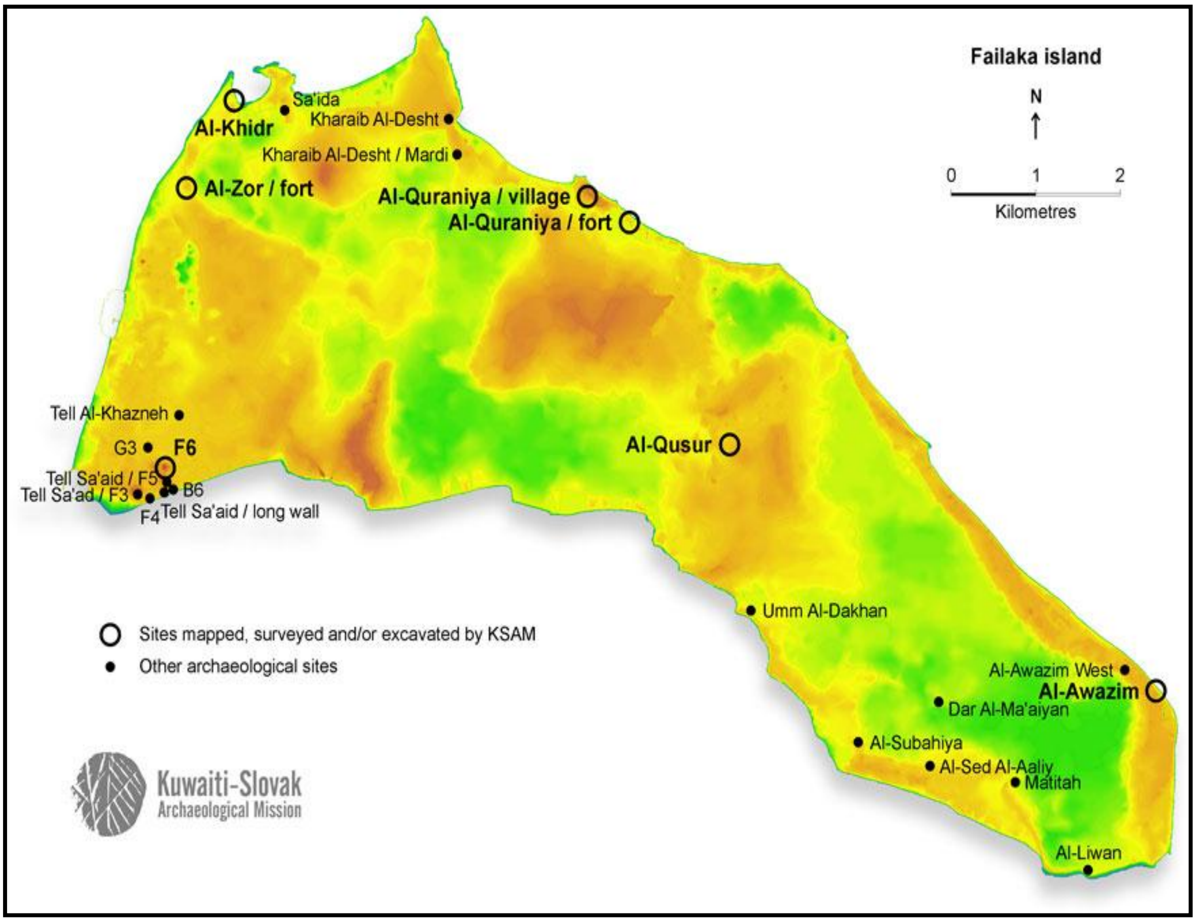


Figure 8.26. Map showing the Khara'ib Desht and al-Quraniya sites on Failaka Island (Benedikovà 2008, 12).

Khara'ib Dhasht

Khara'ib Dhasht is located on the northern coast of Failaka Island. It is about 300m x 1km. The site comprises several hills. Most of archaeological structures are housing units positioned close to each other (Callot and Calvet 1999, 4-5). However, a few units were isolated from the others. The lack of finds from these structures makes it

difficult to say what these were used for. The units were built of sandstone and mud (al-Mutairi 2010, 26). This site is one of the largest on Failaka Island. Although al-Resheed (1978) noted that there were some archaeological villages on the island of Failaka, such as, al-Subahiyah, Dhasht and al-Quraniya, the site was first recorded by Lorimer (1970, 792). A copy of the book al-Muwatta, which is one of the famous early Islamic books, was rewritten by a Kuwaiti religious man, Ottman bin Sanad; in it he reported that he was born in the village of Dasht AD1766, indicating that the site was inhabited at that time (al-Mutairi 2010, 26). The first survey was carried out on this site was by an Italian team in 1976 (Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 419). The French team, in 1999, surveyed the site also. Through the pottery found on the site surface, the French team suggested that the site dates to the 16th and 17th century AD (Callot and Calvet 1999, 3).

Al-Quraniya

Al-Quraniya is located in the middle of the north coast of Failaka. It has been mentioned in several historical sources; the oldest indication was by Lorimer (1970) who noted that in al-Quraniya there was the house of Sheikh Jaber, who was the son of Sheikh Mubarak, the ruler of Kuwait (1896 - 1915). Al-Resheed (1978) reported that al-Quraniya was the remains of a village in the mid-north coast. In this village was a mosque and a cemetery and some wells (al-Failakāwī 2000, 24). This site is on a high hill, with agricultural land and water wells being located in the south. The surface of the site rises above sea level to about 6 – 8m. This site is one of the highest areas of land on the island. The site is about 250 x 500m (Benedikovà 2008, 51). The first survey was conducted in 1976 by an Italian team. The team discovered 21 houses that varied, being either sub-circular or sub-square in plan. They were built of sandstone and mudbrick. The village may be dated to the early Islamic period to the

16th century AD, when the Portuguese built a fort to the east of it. Pottery was found, such as green glazed ware, yellow glazed ware, black slip-painted ware and majolica. Porcelain bracelets were also discovered (Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 419 - 21). Some of them were similar to findings in other areas (see discussion below).

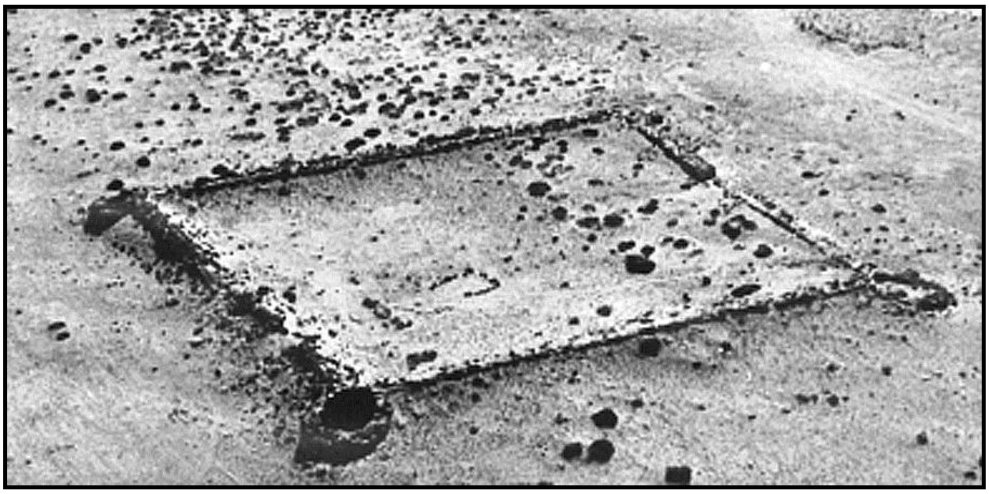


Figure 8.27. Photograph showing the al-Quraniya fort (Benedikovà 2008, 50).

Approximately, 450m to the southeast of this site is a fort called al-Quraniya. The fort is square in plan with a circular tower at each corner (see Figure 8.27). Its main doors are located on the southern side, with a small entrance on the northern side. There appear to be no structures inside the fort. It measures approximately 32 x 33m. The concrete blocks of the walls were looted by the Iraqi army in 1990 (Callot and Calvet 1999,4). The fort is now covered by sand and the main features of it can barely been seen. Bibby (1985) who was the first archaeologist to work at the site, excavated one of the towers. He concluded that the coarse pottery with a turquoise glaze dates typologically to 200 years ago, and that the circular towers represent a model of Arab fortifications rather than the more recent Portuguese forts.

Al-Balt

Al-Balt is located on the northwestern coast of Failaka. This site has some archaeological structural remains. Shehab (1999) proposed that these structures could be small rooms used by fishermen in the winter for protection from the elements; this is a practice that still exists in Kuwait today. At the moment, the site is thought to be Late Islamic due to the pottery fragments found. Fragments of modern pottery and Chinese porcelain were, however, found on the surface with the examples of late Islamic pottery. This unfortunately means that the Islamic pottery is not in an archaeologically secure context; the site will require detailed excavation for the date to be properly determined.'

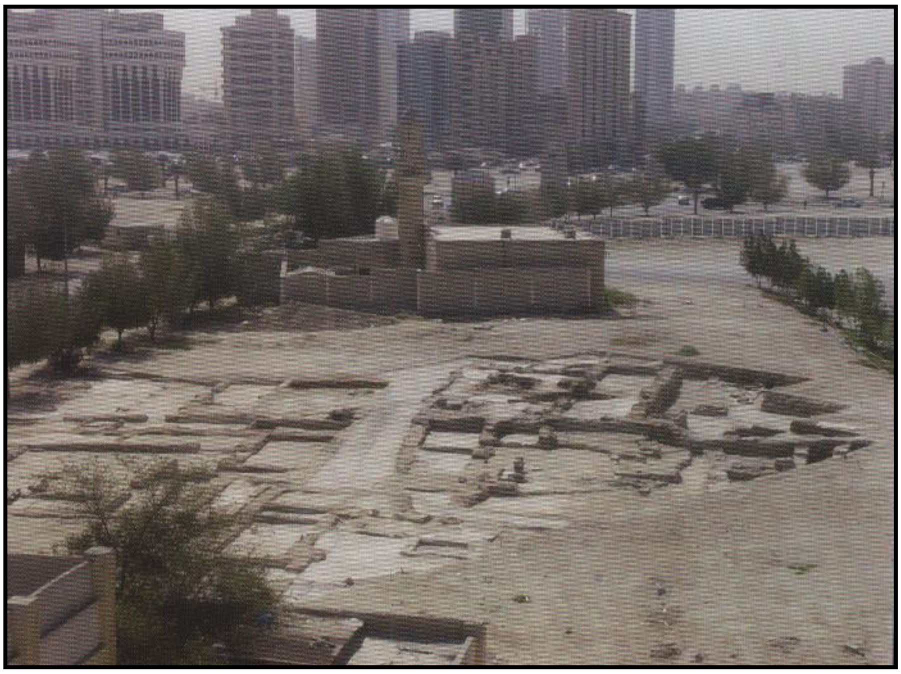


Figure 8.28. Photograph showing Behaitah before the modern construction of a libray (al-Duweesh 2007, 23).

Behaitah

Behaitah is located in Kuwait city (see Figure 8.28). This site was located on several hills. Found here were structures, pottery, tanūr (bread oven) and ornaments. The typologies of the finds suggest that this site dates to the late Islamic period. Unfortunately, further investigations are no longer possible, as a big library has been built on this site (al-Duweesh 2003, 23; al-Mutairi and Salem 2003, 2).

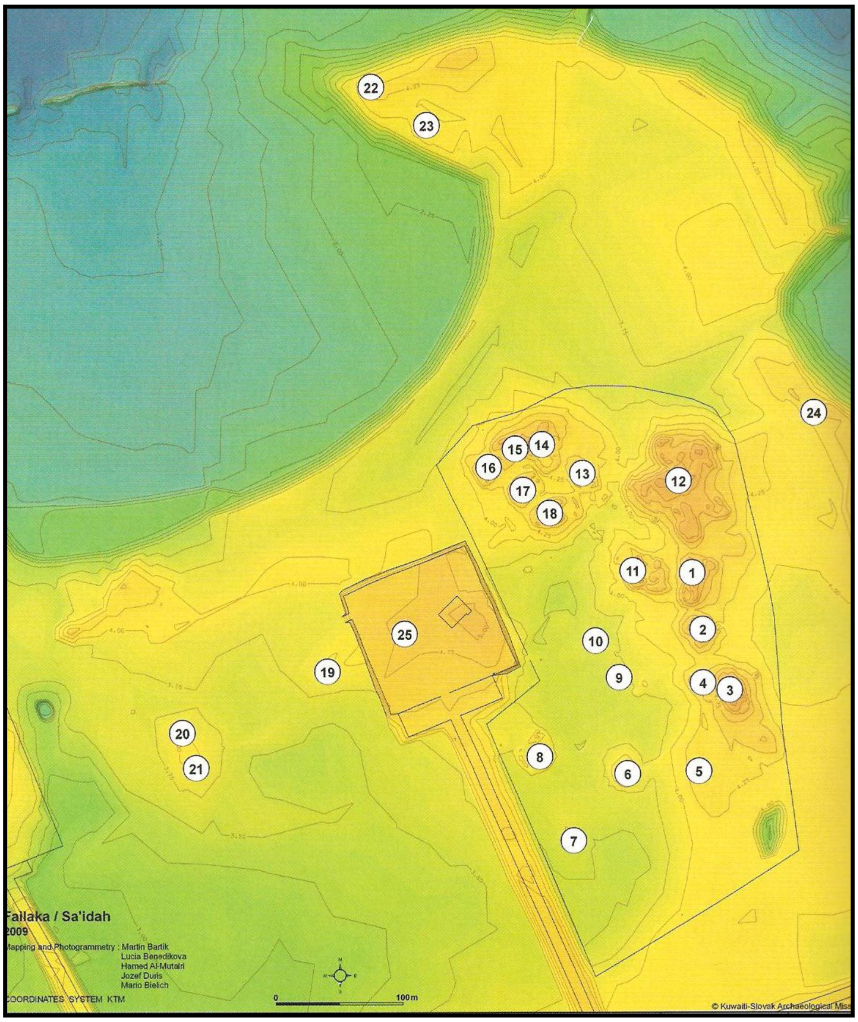


Figure 8.29. Map showing Sa'ida Village and it associated hills, numbered 1 to 24 (Benedikovά 2010, 80).

Sa'ida Village

Sa'ida Village is located on the northern coast of Failaka (see Figure 8.29). It is bordered from the north and northwest by al-Khidr and from the north and northeast by Dohat Ruisiyah, and from the east by Khara'ib Desht. From the south there are open spaces to the mainland (al-Mutairi 2010, 51). Dickson, a British political agent in Kuwait, recorded the site in 1937, by drawing a map that showed illustrated Sa'ida Village (Bernard *et al*. 1991, 170; al-Mutairi 2010, 51). The Danish mission created a similar map in 1958 (al-Mutairi 2010, 51). The site was mentioned also by the survey of the Johns Hopkins mission in 1972 (Carter 1972, 20; al-Mutairi 2010, 51).

Carter (1972) noted shiny blue Islamic pottery dating to several periods on the site. Al-Mutairi (2010) reported that this pottery is similar to examples found in the Qajar period (AD1785 - 1925). Furthermore, the pottery was similar to the Bibby collection which was found in several late Islamic sites at Failaka, such as al-Quraniya, al-Zur Fort and Khara'ib Desht (al-Mutairi 2010, 51-2). Khan (1975, 5) surveyed Failaka Island and mentioned that the Sa'ida site had Islamic pottery. The site was also mentioned by the Italian mission when they surveyed Failaka Island in 1976 (Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 417-8). The Kuwaiti-French team surveyed this site in 1999 (Callot and Calvet 1999, 4; Shehab 1999, 31) and the Kuwaiti-Arabian Gulf team excavated one hill in the eastern part of it in 2001 (al-Mutairi 2010, 53). The Kuwaiti-Slovak team also surveyed it in 2006 to compare its materials with the al-Khidr finds (Bedikovά 2007, 14-5). Al-Mutairi (2010) worked at this site in 2009.

In recent times the site has been badly damaged by modern action, mostly by the Kuwaiti government and people. The western side has become a place for discarding waste construction materials. The soil of the northern side has been washed by contractors to create soft sand. The Kuwaiti government built a slaughterhouse on part of the site, which led to the destruction of this area. They also built an electric power station on the eastern part of the site, which has led to more damage. In 1990 some areas were destroyed by the Iraqi army as they dug their defensive trenches. The site is approximately 2km². On the surface of the site were found the foundations of houses. The site has 24 hills; most of them have not been excavated yet. I will discuss Hills 1 and 24, which have been excavated. The first one (Hill 1) was excavated by the Kuwaiti - Arabian Gulf team in 2001 (al-Mutairi 2010, 53), and the other (Hill 24) had several trenches dug into it by al-Mutairi 2009 (al-Mutairi 2010, 69).

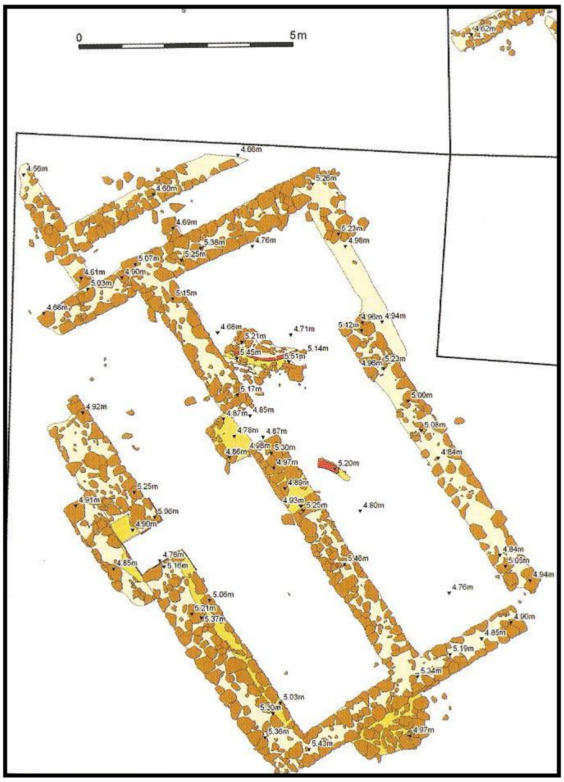


Figure 8.30. Plan of Sa’ida mosque (Benedikovà 2010, 88).

Hill 1

During the excavations of this hill, it was clear that there were two phases of occupation separated by a sterile sand layer, about 10 to 35cm thick. The first phase was the upper-most layer, where a mosque was discovered; in the second phase deep foundation walls truncated the earlier mosque walls – these were not fully excavated (see Figure 8.30). The mosque is a typical example of Arabian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula mosques in the early and late Islamic period, and comprises two main parts. It is rectangular in shape, about 12.5 x 17m and consists of a main living area and an enclosed adjoining courtyard. The front of the mosque which has prayer space, the Minbar (a high platform in the front part of a mosque used for delivering speeches), and the Mihrab (the Imam's position). This mosque is situated in the eastern part of the site of the Sa'ida village. The mosque has two mihrabs, one in the front, which is rectangular shaped, and the other in the back which is semi-circular shaped (al-Mutairi 2010, 92-3, 99). Such characteristics were common in the 19th century AD in the Arabian Gulf. People used the back mihrab at Maghreb (sunset) and Isha'a (evening) prayers, during the summer season, because it would be very hot inside the mosque (al-Tikretī 2002, 119-137). There are similar mosques in Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf region. For instance, there is a mosque at Failaka called al-Shafi'ie mosque, although it does not have a back mihrab (al-Mutairi 2010, 93). There is a similar mosque with two mihrabs, found in al-'Ain Emirate, in the United Arab Emirates, which dates to the early Islamic period (al-Tikretī 2002, 119-37). Furthermore, there were mosques with two mihrabs found in al-Battaliya Village, which is located in the east of Saudi Arabia (al-Hussain 2001, 140-1), and in the Omer mosque in Duwmat al-Jundal, which is located in the north of Saudi Arabia (al-Tayesh 2006, 468).



Figure 8.31. Photograph showing the mosque mihrab with the minbar stairs to the northeast of the photograph (al-Mutairi 2010, 262).

Minbar

The minbar is located on the right-hand side of the mihrab, in the front of the Sa'ida mosque. It has a three-stepped stairway, which is covered with plaster (see Figure 8.31). The stairs are about 30cm wide and 15cm high. This minbar differs from others that date to the early Islamic period in that it has access from the mihrab wall and this style was common in many mosques in Kuwait during the 18th and 19th century AD, for instance, the Ibn Bahar mosque in Kuwait city (al-Mutairi 2010, 100).

Minaret

The minaret is a tower rising from a mosque, and it is often circular, octagonal or square in plan. Its purpose was to be used as a high point for the Adhān (the call to pray), but nowadays minarets have just become a decorative aspect to mosques. In the Sa'ida mosque there was no complete minaret but there were circular shaped stones in the southern part of the mosque. It appears that this is the remains of a minaret, which had a diameter of about 1.35m and 0.40m high. This shape of minaret is similar to the Murwab mosque minaret in Qatar, which dates to the early Islamic period (al-Mutairi 2010, 101).

Hill 24

Initially, four test pits were dug into this hill, revealing some stone foundations, which were approximately 29 x 29m. The stones were with mud. This building is very close to the sea. Through field work and aerial photographs, it is clear that this building was accessed from the side facing the sea. It has been compared with other sites on the Kuwaiti mainland, and it is similar to ship repair sites in Ras Asherij, which is located at the head of Kuwait Bay (Carter 1972, 12). Therefore, from its location close the sea, its architecture that opens from the sea and the comparisons with the other sites on the mainland, it can be suggested that this building was used as a workshop for repairing ships (al-Mutairi 2010, 90).

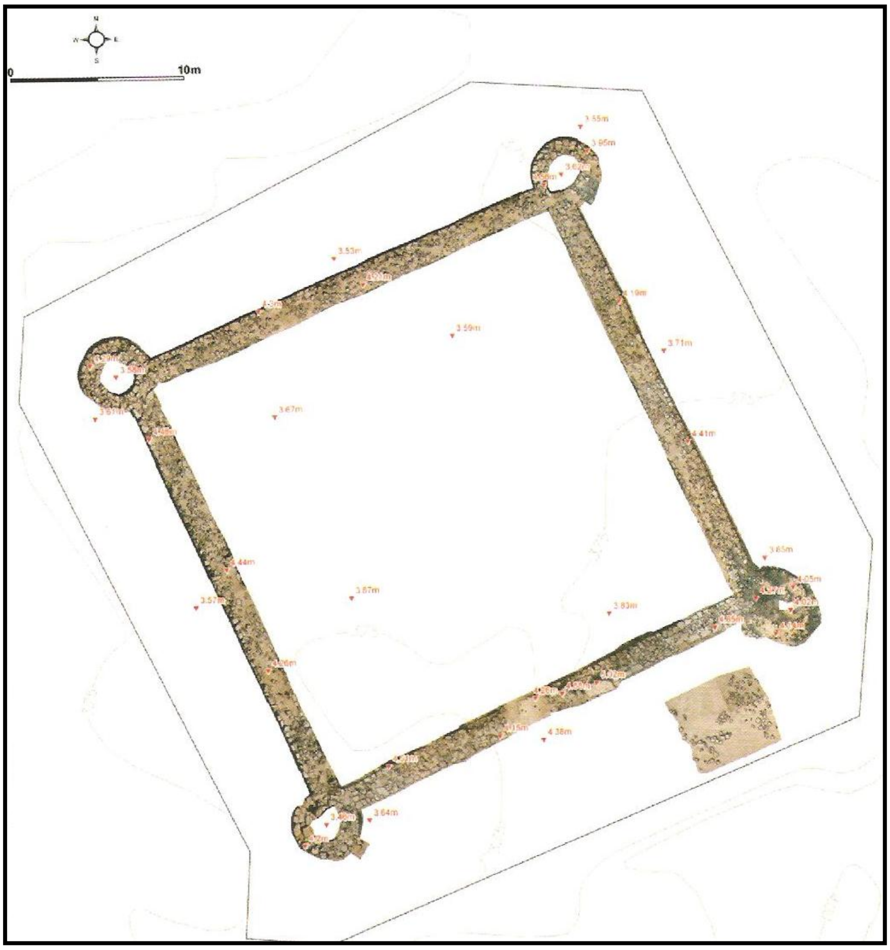


Figure 8.32. Showing the plan of al-Zur (Benedikovά 2010, 55).

Al-Zur Fort

Al-Zur fort is located in the northwest of Failaka Island, on the al-Zur shore, about 300m from the sea (see Figure 8.32). It is bordered from the north by the sea and from the west and south by modern houses. It is located between archaeological sites that date to the Bronze Age. For instance, to the northeast there is al-Khidr (see Chapter 5), and other Bronze Age sites are located to the south of the fort (Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 416; Callot and Calvet 1999, 4; Bedikovά 2008, 53; Shehab 2007b, 23-4; al-Mutairi 2010, 81). The fort is square in plan. The whole fort covers an area of about 650m², with dimensions of *c*. 25 x 25 m. It has an entrance in the southern side and the walls are about 80cm to 1m high. It is likely to have reached between 7 to 9m (al-Mutairi 2010, 105). Each corner has circular tower, with the southern tower no

longer being complete and probably collapsed. As there are no steps to these towers (al-Mutairi 2010, 105), ropes were probably used to climb them. This technique was common in the late Arabian Gulf forts. For instance, the elders of the Qatari people narrated that they used ropes to reach fort towers (al-Khulaifī 2003, 115; see also al-Mutairi 2010, 106). In the northern part of the fort, there was a rectangular room found measuring 8 x 2.10m. Along the western wall, there were also some rooms but they were not clear enough to measure. There were no wells in the fort and its finds were few. This may indicate that it was not inhabited for a long time. It may have been used for surveillance or storage (al-Mutairi 2010, 106). The fort is built of sandstones, which are abundant on the island, with mud used to mortar them. The buildings inside the fort, such as for rooms, were constructed of mubricks (al-Mutairi 2010, 81).

This fort was first discovered by the Italian mission in 1976. They described it as Portuguese (Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 416). In 1999, the Kuwaiti-French team surveyed this fort and also described it as a Portuguese fort (Callot and Calvet 1999, 4). In 2003, the Kuwaiti team excavated this fort and determined the exact measurement of the fort (see above; al-Duweesh *et al*. 2004, 6). In 2006, the Kuwaiti-Slovak team surveyed and mapped the site. They produced a topographical plan with photogrammetrical images (al-Mutairi 2010, 74; Bedikovά 2008, 53). Bedikovά (2008) contested that the fort was Portuguese; she noted that this fort was probably Arab due to its stylistic similarities to the al-Quraniya fort.

Finds at Sa‘ida village and al-Zur fort

There were several archaeological finds on both sites, such as animal and fish bones, fish net, pottery, ceramic, porcelain and coins. All of them were studied in 2010 by Hamed al-Mutairi, who is a Kuwaiti archaeologist. I will choose two of them as examples.

Pottery

The total number of the pottery fragments, which were picked up from both sites, was 4647. The fragments, which were collected at the Sa’ida Village site were about 3939, while at al-Zur fort were about 708. Microscopic examinations of pottery fragments show that there were four main temper types, which are subdivided into nine groups (see discussions below). The first type contained soft sand, such as group 1. The second type contained a mixture of soil and limestone, such as group 2, 4, 7 and 8. The third type contained volcanic granules mixed with limestone, such as group 5, 6 and 9. The fourth type contained sandy soil, limestone and some made of grass and hay, such as group 3. Ten fragments of pottery were analysed chemically. It was determined that all the fragments had different soil types within as temper. This may indicate the diversity of the pottery sources, which came from different places; only one type appears to be local (e.g. Group 7). This suggests that the majority of pottery arrived from external sources; these other locations may have been Murwab in Qatar, Julfar in the United Arab Emiartes and Enddām Valley in Oman.

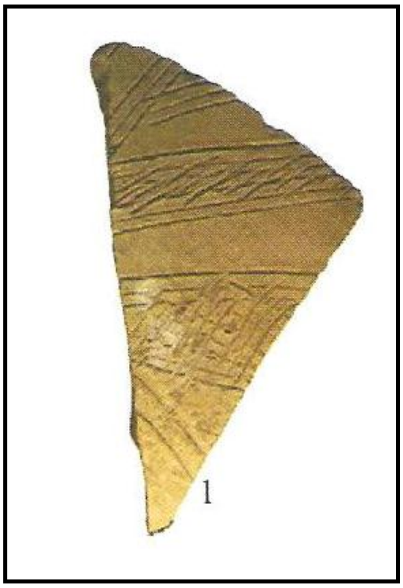


Figure 8.33. Showing incised decorated pottery from group 1 at Sa’ida Village (al-Mutairi 2010, 297).

Group 1 provides an excellent example of how some were decorated (see Figure 8.33). It is made from soft clay and is well fired to a pale yellow colour. There were finger traces on the clay. The majority of the fragments did not have a decoration but some of them contain straight lines or overlapping lines. This group was found on both sites: Sa’ida Village had about 727 fragments, while al-Zur fort had 117 fragments.

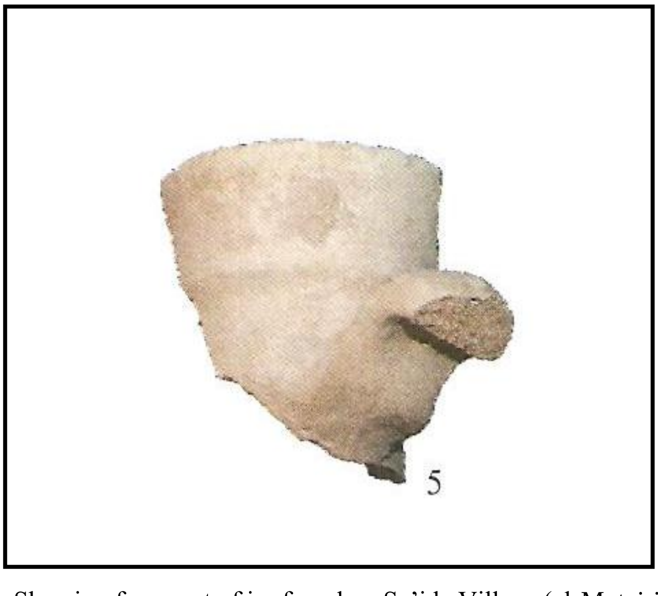


Figure 8.34. Showing fragment of jar found on Sa’ida Village (al-Mutairi 2010, 300).

Most of these fragments belonged to Jars (see Figure 8.34). This group continued to be in use from the Hellenistic period (see Chapter 6) to the late Islamic period at Failaka Island, where it was found at the Hellenistic fort, al-Quraniya and Behaitah in Kuwait city. This group was probably imported from other areas, such Mesopotamia. A fragment of a vessel rim showing the mould decoration was found on the surface of Sa'ida. This type of decoration industry was common during the first Abbasid period (AD750 - 842).

Pottery very similar in form and decoration to Group 1 is found in Samarra, in Iraq, dating from the 8th to the 13th century AD, in Egypt during the Fatimid period (AD953 - 1171), and Raqqa in Syria (see Chapter 3). To the East, Nishapur, which is located in Khorasan province in northeast Iran, was an important centre for the creation of moulded ceramics. It then moved to other areas, such as Afghanistan (Wilkinson 1973, 290-4; Watson 2004, 93-4; see also al-Mutairi 2010, 117).

Group 1 pottery was also found at Julfar (the old name of Ras al-Khaimah Emirate) in the United Arab Emirates in phase III. It has a cream and light yellow colour. It dates to the 11th to the 15th century AD (Vogt 1991, 11), while most the pottery which did not have decoration at Julfar dates to the 17th to the 20th century AD (al-Mutairi 2010, 117). Julfar is located at the head of the Arabian Gulf, on the entrance to the Arabian Gulf. Julfar was an important industrial centre in the southern Gulf during the 14th century AD (al-Muatiri 2010, 129).

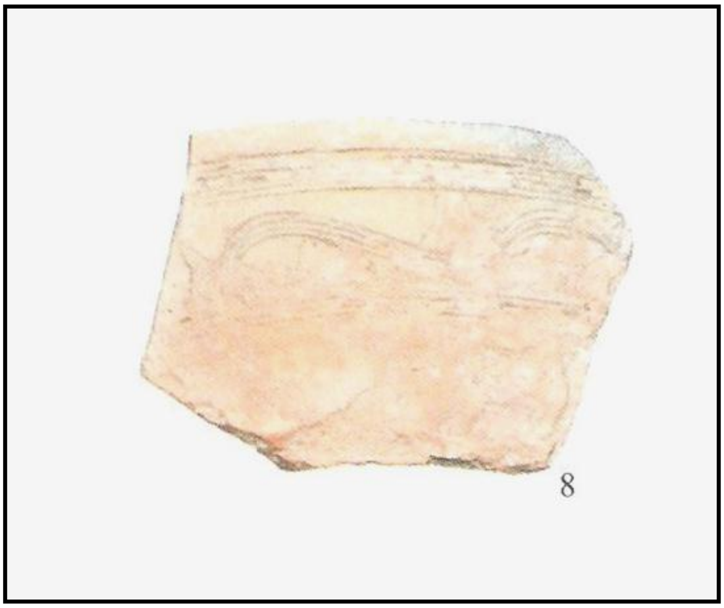


Figure 8.35. A fragment of pottery from Group 2 (al-Mutairi 2010, 299).

Group 2 has soft, well-fired clay and it has various fabric colours, such as pale brown, pale yellow, reddish yellow, pink and light grey. It has deep grooves for decoration which consist of straight or zigzag lines (see Figure 8.35). This group was found in Sa'ida Village, with approximately 1406 fragments and approximately 201 fragments were found at al-Zur fort. A fragment of jar of this type was found in the late Islamic areas in Kuwait, such as Khara'ib Desht, Failaka Island, Behaitah, and Kuwait city. This type of jar has also been found in the Arabian Gulf, at al-Zubara in Qatar, which dates to the 17th century AD (al-Khulaifi 1987, 103). Moreover, it was found in the Emirate of Ajman in the United Arab Emirates. This group dates from the 17th to the 20th century AD (al-Mutairi 2010, 119).

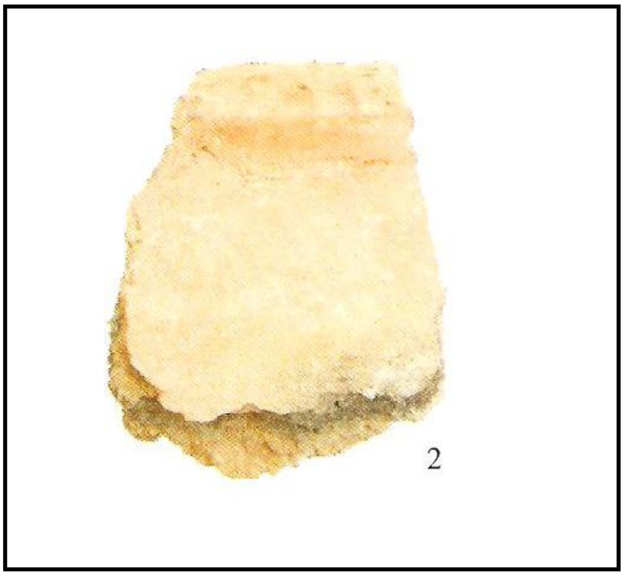


Figure 8.36. Showing pottery fragment of Group 3 (al-Mutairi 2010, 301).

Group 3 is handmade and has a coarse clay that is not well-fired. It is light yellowish brown. It has red geometric (vertical and horizon) lines for decoration. There were traces of finger decorations (see Figure 8.36). Approximately 367 fragments were collected from Sa'ida Village and 58 fragments from the al-Zur fort. Fragments similar to this group were found in the late Islamic sites in Kuwait, such as Behaitah (al-Mutairi 2010, 121), and in the Arabian Gulf they were found at al-Zubara in Qatar (al-Khulaifī 1987, 108).

After examining some of the fragments, it was determined that they belonged to a tanūr (bread pottery oven). Three tanūrs were found in al-Zur and two tanūrs were found in Sa'ida Village. Tanūrs are usually oval in shape. The tanūrs which were found in both sites were about 0.50m high. According to tanūr typologies, they can be divided into two types: the first type was made of a rough material and its clay is brown in colour, and the second type was made of solid clay and was well fired and it is yellow in colour. Similar tanūrs were found in Behaitah in Kuwait City (al-Mutairi and Salem 2010, 3; al-Mutairi 2010, 122). They date to the 19th century AD (al-

Mutairi 2010, 122). Similar tanūrs were also found in the northeast of Umm al-Namel Island. Umm al-Namel Island may have brought tanūrs from Abadan (southeast Iran) or from southern Iraq. Some of the tanūrs were produced at Failaka Island and continued to be used until the mid 20th century AD (al-Wohaibi 1987, 123). Furthermore, similar tanūrs were found at Julfar (Sasaki 2004, 4-5; al-Mutairi 2010, 122). They date from the 15th to the 20th century AD (al-Mutairi 2010, 122).

Group 4 is a coarse and well-fired reddish yellow clay. The decoration of this group was minimal, but some fragments were found with deep grooves as decoration. This group was found at Sa'ida Village via 168 fragments and in al-Zur in about 41 fragments. Through the fragments that were collected at both sites, it is clear that there were two main types of vessel: first, vessels with flat bases, and second, vessels with circular bases (al-Mutairi 2010, 123).

Fragments of pottery lamps were found but were rare. For example, there were two fragments at Sa'ida Village where pottery lamps had fire remains on their edges. Firfelt (2001) stated that similar pottery lamps were found in Bahrain. The first type was a bowl with a twisted edge, found at Qala'at al-Bahrain. This was similar to the Sa'ida Village lamps. The second type had a candlestick shape, which was also found at Qala'at al-Bahrain (Firfelt 2001, 101), but this type only was found at Behaitah in Kuwait city. This dates to the 17th and 18th century AD (al-Mutairi 2010, 123-4).

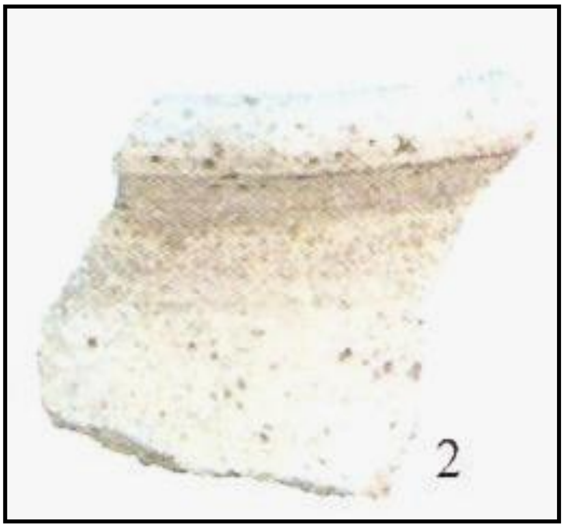


Figure 8.37. Showing pottery fragment of Group 5 (al-Mutairi 2010, 299).

Group 5: This group has a coarse and solid clay. It was well-fired and has several colours, such as dark/light grey and light brown. Its decoration comprises a strap made of the same clay or separated clay that was applied later. There was also a prominent strap on the jar body. Moreover, there were deep grooves as decoration around the body, which form upright or sloping lines (see Figure 8.37). About 361 fragments of this group were found at Sa'ida Village and about 76 fragments were discovered at al-Zur fort. This group has thick fragments of pottery walls 1.3cm thick, which indicates that it may have been a big jar used for storage. Also, remains of fire damage were found, suggesting that it may have been used for cooking. Similar pottery to this group was found at al-Qusur on Failaka Island (see Chapter 7), and Behaitah in Kuwait City. In the Arabian Gulf, it was found at al-Derbahaniya in the United Arab Emirates dating to the 16th century AD (Taha 1975, 279). Al-Mutairi (2010) noted that this group dates from the 16th century to the 19th century AD, as it compares with similar pottery at late Islamic sites in Kuwait.

Group 6 has a coarse well-fired red clay, that is black on the outer surface. This may indicate that this group was used as cooking vessels. It was difficult to see

the decorations on this group because it had been badly burnt, but by comparison with similar pottery from Behaitah, it can be concluded that the decorations take geometric shapes such as triangles and straight lines from the top to the middle of the body with red or brown colours.

Al-Mutairi (2010) suggested that from its shape and the remains of fire exposure, it was probably used for cooking. The fragments that were collected from Sa'ida Village were about 177 in number, while from al-Zur there were 31, including fragment of mouths and handles. These pots have a pear shape. Similar pots were found at Behaitah in Kuwait city. In the Arabian Gulf, there was a similar pot found in Qala'at al-Bahrain (Bibby 1985, 164), and another pot was found at Diraz. This pot had some Ottoman coins inside dating from AD1574 to 1632 (al-Mutairi 2010, 127). A similar pot was found at al-Dor in Umm al-Quwain Emirate dating to the 18th century AD. In addition, another similar pot was found at al-Zawraa in Ajman Emirate dating to the late Islamic period. Furthermore, pottery similar to this group was found at al-Derbahaniya in Julfar, which is known as Julfar pottery; it dates to the 16th century AD (al-Shukrī 1978, 161). Despite the Portuguese occupation of Julfar at the beginning of the 17th century AD, this style of pottery continued in production until the beginning of the 20th century AD (al-Mutairi 2010, 129). So here we have an example of the changing of a political élite, but on the ground, the pottery remains the same. Such an occurrence highlights the difficulties in describing groups of people and their beliefs just upon pottery styles.

Group 7 is made up of coarse brown un-decorated fired clay Approximately 42 fragments were found at Sa'ida Village and at al-Zur fort, approximately 11 fragments. This is a very small number if compared with the other pottery groups. There is no evidence for pottery similar to this, except maybe a possible example in

Khara'ib Desht and al-Quraniya at Failaka Island. It dates to the late Islamic period. This type was common on Failaka Island. This may indicate that it was a local pottery (al-Mutairi 2010, 130).

Group 8 has coarse clay, in several colours, such as reddish-brown, reddish yellow and pale yellow; it is un-decorated. About 31 fragments were found in Sa'ida Village and 35 at the al-Zur fort. Similar pottery was found at al-Qusur (see Chapter 7), and at Jazirat Dubaij in Sabbiyah (al-Mutairi 2010, 131; see also Chapter 3).

Group 9 also has coarse clay. It was very solid and well fired. The clay is formed by several colours, such as light brown, yellowish brown, pale yellow, light and dark grey. Some potteries were coated with bitumen on the inside and others were coated on the outside. It was probably used to repair the pottery or as a waterproof. It seems that bitumen continued to be a significant material that was used from the Ubaid period to the late Islamic period (see Chapter 3 and 5). Not all of the pottery in this group has decorations. Some pieces have five or six grooves, which probably surrounded the vessel body and others have a strap, which was fixed later. In addition, some of them have decorative colours applied, such as brown, red and black. This group of pottery was found at Sa'ida Village with about 651 pieces in number and at al-Zur fort with about 87 pieces in number (al-Mutairi 2010, 132). After reconstruction, it appears that some of the pieces belonged to pots with flat bases, with handles and narrow neck. Similar pottery was found at al-Quraniya and Behaitah in Kuwait, and at some sites in the Arabian Gulf, such as al-Zubara in Qatar, Jobeil Island in the United Arab Emirates (Hellyer 1998, 54-61; see also al-Mutairi 2010, 134), and Anddam in the Sultanate of Oman. This group dates from the 17th to the 20th century AD (al-Mutarir 2010, 134).

Coins

Most of the coins that were found at Sa’ida Village and al-Zur fort were cleaned in the laboratories of Kuwait University and the Kuwait National Museum. Two coins were found at al-Zur. The first one was found in square F4 about 60cm below the current ground surface. Its diameter was about 12mm, 1mm thick and weighted 0.2 grams. The second was found at square B10, again around 60cm below the surface. Its diameter is about 10 x 11mm, 2mm thick and it weighs 1.3 grams. The writing on these coins is not clear and mostly illegible (al-Mutairi 2010, 170).

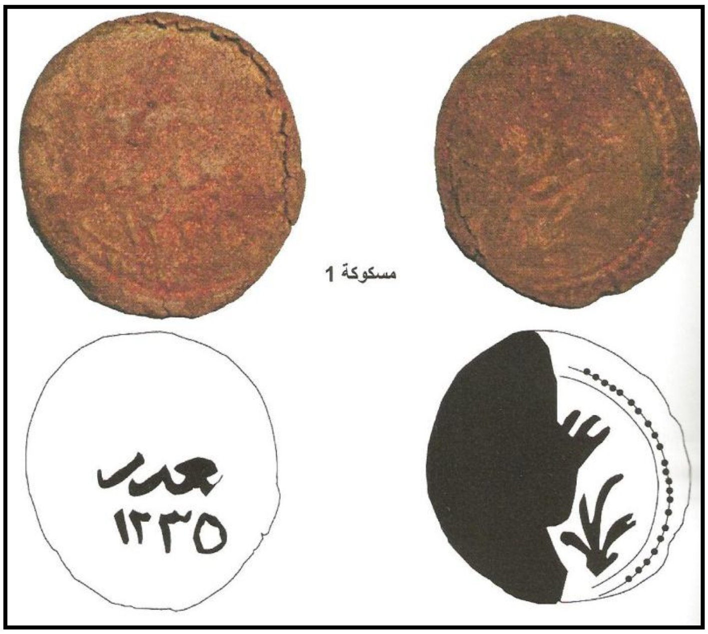


Figure 8.38. Coins from the Sa’ida Village (al-Mutairi 2010, 27).

During several seasons of excavation at Sa’ida Village from 2001 to 2003, 28 coins were found. The first of these coins was found in square F2 at about 40cm below the surface. It is made of copper, with a diameter of about 22mm, 15mm thick and its weight is 4.4 grams. The text on the coin indicates that it was issued in Baghdad in AH1235/AD1819 (see Figure 8.38). Its reverse has a tughra stamp seal. A tughra, which was a calligraphic monogram, was a seal or signature of the Ottoman sultan (al-Mutairi 2010, 171). Another coin made of copper was found at square B3 at

about 140cm below the surface. Its diameter is about 10 x 11mm, 1mm thick and its weight is about 0.3 grams. This coin also could not be read. Most other coins were found on the site surface; all of them are approximately the same size. Their diameter are about 10mm, 1.5mm thick and their weights are around 0.6 grams. All of them were made of copper (al-Mutairi 2010, 171).

The pottery which was found at the Sa'ida Village and al-Zur fort, indicates that there was long-distance trade between Kuwait and other regions. In the Eastern Arabian Peninsula similar pottery was found to that of the mainland of Kuwait in Behaitah, in Kuwait city. In addition, parallel examples of pottery were found in al-Zubara in Qatar, Julfar and Ajman in the United Arab Emirates, and Enddām Valley in the Sultanate of Oman. In the east bank of the Arabian Gulf similar pottery was found in Nishabur, in northeast Iran (Wilkinson 1973, 93-4; al-Mutairi 2010, 117). In terms of the north, similar pottery was discovered in the area of Raqqa in Syria. From the west, we have similar pottery styles in Egypt (al-Muttairi 2010, 117). This indicates that Kuwait at that time is likely to have been a central trade place (see Chapter 3), which received goods from the southern Arabian Gulf, then exported them to the northern Arabian Gulf. It also imported commodities from the east (Iran) which it then exported to the west, Egypt.

I have conducted my own archaeological survey in the al-Kuwaisat area in 2010 with the Kuwaiti and Bahraini archaeological team. Al-Khuwaisat area is located between al-Jahra and Kadhima. The area which we surveyed is located between Sabbiyah road and al-Khuwaisat farms. It was about $2km^2$ divided into 200 x 200m which the team walked, spaced at 15m intervals, collecting artifacts and recording more substantial features, such as potential structures, shell and pottery. We found on the surface, shells, bracelets and pottery. The majority of finds were fragments of pottery which were similar to the Sa'ida Village pottery. We also found a small vase that has a red pigment on its rim and red lines from the rim to the vase body. A similar vase was found in al-Zubara in Qatar, which dates to 19^{th} century AD (see Figures 8.39, 8.40 and 8.41; Kuwaiti-Bahraini team 2010, 10-11).



Figure 8.39. Photograph showing the al-Khuwaisat vase before repair at the Kuwait National Museum (Photographed by al-Duweesh 2010).



Figure.8.40. Photograph showing the al-Khuwaisat vase after repair at the Kuwait National Museum (Photographed by al-Duweesh 2010).



Figure 8.41. A similar vase from the al-Zubara site in Qatar (Abdul-Aziz 2009, 252).

At Sa'ida Village the site heavy stone and ceramic objects were found, which were probably used for fishing as net sinkers. This indicates that the inhabitants practised fishing. This interpretation is also supported by the fish bones, which were found at the site (al-Mutairi 2010, 173). Also, pieces of pottery used for spinning were found. This may indicate that inhabitants had experience of weaving. The eastern side of the site was probably a farm area; this is supported by a document which dates to AH1309/AD1891, which indicates that this site was planted with palm trees (al-Mutairi 2010, 173). The bone, which was collected from the site, tallies at about 591 bone pieces. Archaeozoological analyses of these bones has been carried out (see Figure 8.42). It appears that the inhabitants of the site relied on mammals, such as goats and sheep, for their protein food source (al-Mutairi 2010, 174). Although, it should be noted that the occurrence of bones on a site does not prove that people were actually eating the flesh of these creatures.

Class	NISP	%	weight	%
shell	3	0.51	20.77	1.24
cephalopod	4	0.68	6.4	0.38
reptile	7	1.18	10.86	0.65
bird	85	14.38	67.7	4.04
fish	164	27.75	264.15	15.77
mammal	328	55.50	1305.28	77.92
TOTAL	591	100.00	1675.16	100.00

Figure 8.42. The percentages and types of bones found at at Sa'ida Village (al-Mutairi 2010, 327).

Why were mammal bones found in such a large quantity? This question can be answered by two possibilities. The first is that the inhabitants consumed meat more than fish in their diet; however, this is not reasonable as they lived on island, where an easier and more abundant source of food was probably from the sea. The second possibility is that this hill, which was only partly excavated, was a sacred site and the inhabitants sacrificed animals, such as goats and sheep at this site. This has occurred in other sites at Failaka Island (see al-Khidr site in Chapter 5). Studying the site bones shows several kinds of animals, birds and fish, such as goats, sheep, hens, cormorant, kestrel, buzzard, emperor, grouper, seabream, sharks and ray (al-Mutairi 2010, 174). Some of these may have been for eating, while others (e.g. the buzzard) may have arrived by other processes. As isotopic analysis cannot be conducted on Islamic humans remains from the site, it is impossible to say for certain what was actually eaten. The range of bones discovered may, however, indicate a mixed subsistence strategy that incorporates domesticated animals with hunting and fishing.

The size of al-Zur fort means that it would have been restricted in the amout of people it could have housed. Animal and fish bones were found in many of the hearths, such as goats, sheep, sharks and grouper. Also found were many date stones (*Phoenix dactylifera;* see Chapter 5), where the date stones were used for maintaining fires as a slow-burning fuel (al-Mutairi 2010, 174). This usage for the stones from dates is interesting, as we do not have evidence for this activity in earlier periods (e.g. the Dilmun).

The estimated date ranges for the Sa'ida Village and al-Zur

Carter (1972) reported that through the finds that were found on the surface of Sa'ida Village, we can detect different Islamic periods, but she did not offer specific dates. The Italian mission dated this site from the early Islamic to the late Islamic period (Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 417-8). Al-Mutairi (2010) reported that this date was inaccurate and there was no evidence to determine such a long period. The French mission, through the pottery that was collected from the surface, dated the site to the middle Islamic period, the 16th and 17th century AD (Callot and Calvet 1999, 4). The Slovak mission, after examining the ceramic found at the site and the method of its glazing, concluded that the site dates from the 9th to the 20th century AD (Bedikovά 2007, 14-5). Al Mutairi (2010) stated that this date was inaccurate and that such glazed ceramic existed before the ninth century.

Al-Muatiri (2010) reported that the archaeological finds of Hill 1 and the surrounding hills, which were surveyed did not support that the site dated to the early Islamic period. Also, there was no evidence found dating to this period. All of the archaeological material found either during the excavations or archaeological surveys show the middle and the late Islamic periods. There was also a noted lack of late Islamic period materials. The site can therefore be dated to between the 14th and 15th to the 19th century AD (al-Mutairi 2010, 179). The site was abandoned in approximately AD1750 because of the plague (Salem 1985, 28-9). Abu Hakma (1970) noted that a British navy sailor called Felix Jones visited Failaka island in AD1839 and mentioned that this area (Sa'ida Village) was empty (Salem 2006, 34). There is a Waqf text (a type of religious welfare donation) dating to AH1309/AD1891, which confirms that Sa'ida Village had become ruinous (al-Mutairi 2010, 178).

Al-Zur fort

The Italian mission called this fort a Portuguese fort and dated it to the Portuguese presence (AD1507 - 1525). The mission relied on a number of finds, such as a fragment of majolica and a porcelain bowl which they dated to the Portuguese period (Patitucci and Uggeri 1984, 416). This date was inaccurate as the fort in its shape is not characteristic of the Portuguese form. Furthermore, it has never been mentioned in the Arabian Gulf history that the Portuguese ruled the northern Arabian Gulf or had forts in this area (al-Mutairi 2010, 179). Slot (2003) also stated that there were no Portuguese forts in Kuwait, though they were active in Bahrain (al-Mutairi 2010, 179), and on Tarut Island in eastern Arabia (see Chapter 7). In contrast, the French mission dated this fort to the Middle Islamic period, the 16th and 17th century AD (Callot and Calvet 1999, 4). The French mission report does not support this interpretation with data. They probably relied on the Italian Mission's report (al-Mutairi 2010, 179). The Kuwaiti mission has relied on historical sources and the material of the settlements, which were found on this part of the island. They compared the settlement materials with the fort materials where it found that similar building materials were used. Thus, they concluded that the fort dates to the second half of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century AD (Shehab 1999, 31; see also al-Mutairi 2010, 179). The archaeological finds in the fort were very few and they did not help to give a specific date. Most of the pottery was found outside of the fort and they dated it to the modern period between the 17th to 20th century AD. Al-Mutairi (2010) noted that through the ceramics that were found at this fort, it can be dated from the second half of the 18th to the beginning of the 19th century AD (al-Mutairi 2010, 180-1).

Kuwait fortification

Unlike the Arabian Gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait has very few forts. Therefore, the forts of Kuwait are very important because they are rare and reflect the history of urban and military activity (al-Mutairi 2010, 106-7). The oldest known fort built on the land of Kuwait is the Hellenistic fort, which was built in the 4th century BC (see Chapter 6); all the other forts date to the late Islamic period. There is a possibility that there was a fort built by Barrak bin Erai'īr (AD1669 - 1689), who was the Sheikh of the Khalidi tribe that controlled this region during the 17th century AD. It was the oldest Arab fortification in Kuwait, and was built in 1650 (Abu Hakma 1984.19). Slot (2003) reported that one of the members of staff of the East India Company noted in his observations, when he worked in the Arabian Gulf between AD1750 - 1759, that he saw archaeological remains of a Portuguese fort after al-Qurain, which the old name of Kuwait, on the his way to Qatif, which is located in the Eastern Arabian Peninsula (Slot 2003, 141; al-Mutairi 2010, 107). This means that the fort was located in southern Kuwait today; however, the Portuguese did not have any military installations in Kuwait (Slot 2003, 141). Lorimer (1970) stated that there was an old fort in a place called Malah, which is located in southern Kuwait. Both Lorimer (1970) and the East Indian Company employee confirmed that there was a fort in southern Kuwait. So it is possible that it was the fort that was built by Barrak bin Orai'er during his reign of this region (AD1669 - 1689), but it has not yet been found.

There is also the al-Quraniya fort which is similar to al-Zur fort in build and layout. Al-Zur fort building materials are similar to the old houses that are still in existence on al-Zur shore of Failaka Island. During the period of the Portuguese occupation of the Arabian Gulf (AD1507 - 1525), there were several forts built in the region which have defensive and strategic roles, to secure the trade routes in the Arabian Gulf (al-Mutairi 2010, 109). The forts were characterised by a square and semi-square shape with circular and semi-circular towers at each corner. Most of the foundations of the forts were built of sandstone with the walls being built of mud. The foundation thickness was between 1 to 2m. Most of the forts were huge and simple in their interior architecture. There was a noted lack of decoration and windows (Rashid 2004, 45).

A fort similar to the al-Zur fort was found in Qatar; it is called Freiha fort. It is located on the northwest coast of Qatar. It is square shaped in plan with circular towers at each corner. Its walls are approximately 1m thick and 1m high. It dates to between the 17th and the 19th century AD (al-Khulaifī 2000, 54). There is a small fort which was built during the time of Mubarak the Great, the Ruler of Kuwait (1896-1915). Some historians, such as al-Shamlan (1986a), date it to 1897 and others date it to 1914 (al-Wohaibi *et al*. 2001, 5- 6 and 12). It is called al-Qasr al-Ahmar “The Red Palase”, which is one of the main historical buildings in Kuwait, located in Jahra city, north of Kuwait. It has this name because it was built from the red mud. It is square in shape. Its walls are about 4.6m high and the corners are about 6.1m high. Al-Qasr al-Ahmar has five sections: the al-Amir resident, the mosque, the guest rooms, the reception and the stable. It includes 33 rooms, three main gates and six yards; there are also four watchtowers. Al-Qasr al-Ahmar became famous during the al-Jahra Battle in 1920, when the Wahhabi blockaded it (Gharbiah 1989, 150).

8.2 Conclusion

The Islamic periods in Kuwait need further investigation and exploration. It is difficult to determine Islamic sites dating to the early and the late Islamic periods with such a paucity of sites dating to the middle period. Kuwait continued to be a trade centre as a link between the northern and southern Arabian Gulf, even during the Islamic periods. Further excavations will hopefully reveal more datable sites, for instance, at the Sa'ida Village only two hills had been excavated from the 24 hills. Al-Mutairi (2010) stated that remains, such as pottery, found in Hill 5 and Hill 12 perhaps date to the middle Islamic period.

Human burial

During the Slovak and Kuwaiti excavations in 2006, a grave was found in the upper layers in the middle of al-Khidr site (see Chapter 5). It was covered with stones. The grave had a mostly complete skeleton (see Figure 8.43). From the cranial remains of this skeleton it was concluded by anthropologists that this skeleton was an adult. The examinations of the teeth indicate that this adult died between 25-35 years of age. As for its sex, diagnostic features of the skeleton suggest it was male. Also the robust mandible and occipital bone protuberances indicate that it was male. Radiocarbon analysis suggests that this skeleton dates to the middle Islamic period (sample number: GdA-1093, calibrated age range 95%: AD1217 - 1282) (Benedikovà *et al.* 2008, 45; Benedikovà 2010, 36).



Figure 8.43. Photograph showing skeleton remains from al-Khidr site (Benedikovà *et al*. 2008, 44).



Figure 8.44. Middle Islamic period coins found on the Kuwait mainland (al-Mutairi 2010, 290).

In 2007, a Kuwaiti man found a coin at al-Subaiheyah. This coin was made of copper and it was a one fils coin in good condition (see Figure 8.44). The face signifies that it was issued in Baghdad in AH712, which is AD1312, and on the frame is written bism Allah (the name of the god). On the reverse there are two words, al-Sultan al-Adham, which means the great Sultan. In the centre of the reverse side there is an image of the sun and a lion beneath it. There was a similar coin found which has the same date at the Iraqi Museum (al-Bakri 1972, 40; al-Qaysi 2002, 385; al-Mutairi 2010, 44). This coin belonged to the il-Khanid Sultan Muhammad Khudābanda Ujāytū, who was a ruler of Baghdad during (AH703 - 716/AD1304 - 1316; see al-Mutairi 2007, 1-2; Zambaur 1980, 362; al-Qaysi 2001, 234-5; al-Mutairi 2010, 43). Iqbal (2000) noted that the il-Khanid (AD1252 - 1335) was a Mongol ruler of Persia, Iraq, parts of the Levant, east Anatolia and the Caucasus.



Figure 8.45. Middle Islamic period coin found in Subaihyah, southern Kuwait (al-Mutairi 2010, 291).

From the north of al-Subaiheyah, particularly in the Kabd region, another il-Khanid coin was found by a Kuwaiti man in 2008 (see Figure 8.45). On its face is written La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad Rasol Allah (there is no god except Allah, Muhammad the messenger of Allah). On the reverse is written, al-Sultan al-‘Adil Sulaymān Khan Khuld, il-Khanid Sultan, and on the frame it had written the four early Caliphates, Abu Baker, Omer, Othman and Ali (cf. al-Mutairi 2010, 43). There was also the name Suleiman Khan with them. The period of this king’s reign was AH741 - 744/ AD1340 - 1343 (Iqbal 2000, 354; al-Mutairi 2010, 44). Although it is highly probably that people lived in Kuwait during the middle Islamic period, this constitutes some of the first actual evidence. As for the early Islamic period, there is currently no secure location for Kadhima available and so far the historically mentioned Kadhima fort has not been found. The late Islamic period clearly needs more investigation. Slot (2003) stated that there was a fort located in the south of Kuwait but unfortunately it still has not been found.

8.3 Summary

This chapter has discussed the arrival of Islam to Kuwait, through the Islamic sites, which are mostly dated to the early Islamic period (e.g. Kadhima), and the material culture. It has also illustrated many of the Arab tribes that lived in Kuwait, such as Tanūkh and Abd al-Qays. This chapter has explained the importance of Kuwait's strategic location on the pilgrimage and trade caravan routes in the north Arabian Gulf and has demonstrated how connections were maintained with other regions in the Arabian Gulf. In addition, this chapter has discussed some of the interactions between Islam and Christianity when Muslims first began to have control over the region, and how diets as well as beliefs altered. This chapter has presented why Kuwait does not have an archaeological narrative regarding the middle Islamic sites. This chapter has also discussed the Late Islamic periods and the probable connections between Kuwait and other regions in the Arabian Gulf or further away locations, such as Syria and Egypt. Furthermore, this chapter has introduced the evidence for the fortification of Kuwait and its relations with others in the Gulf. In doing so, the lack of dominance of the Portuguese in this region was presented. Here, we have looked into the beginnings for the formation of modern Kuwait, as supported by the known archaeology with historical texts.

Chapter 9

9.1 Conclusion

The land currently known as Kuwait has known human occupation for thousands of years. Kuwait has repeatedly held a significant location in the Arabian Gulf between Mesopotamia, the southern Arabian Gulf and the Indus Valley. This has allowed it to become a major trade centre and network hub between people in the north and the south of the Arabian Gulf (see Chapters 3 and 5). Unfortunately, most people in Kuwait do not know the importance of its archaeology, as I demonstrated in my Masters research (Almutairi 2008, especially Chapter 4). One of the reasons for this is that there has not been a comprehensive synthesis of all the archaeological periods and excavations of Kuwait. Most data exist in the ‘grey literature’ as excavation reports (often in a foreign language) or in academic papers in foreign journals. One of the key aims of this thesis was to collate the disparate data, and produce for the first time a detailed record and overview with interpretation. This work will move towards a new teaching programme for students in Kuwait. At the moment, the educational curriculum in Kuwait does not include pre-Kuwaiti State histories, such as the Ubaid periods and early Islamic phases. I will endeavour to address this by first producing small story pamphlets in an attractive format, that introduce the different histories.

Another key aim of this thesis was to demonstrate through the archaeology that Kuwait has never existed in isolation. I have presented the archaeology in the State of Kuwait from prehistory through to the late Islamic period. Far from being remote, Kuwait had ongoing relationships with surrounding areas, such as Mesopotamia, the Persian and Indus Valley. This was in part due to the geographical importance of Kuwait in the northwest of the Arabian Gulf, linking civilisations of the

South and North Arabian Gulf. Such a prominent location ultimately led to settlement from around 5300BC (e.g. the Ubaid culture, see Chapter 3) to the late Islamic period (see Chapter 8).

It is thought that there are many political and economic factors which contributed to the formation of Kuwaiti society (al-Kandārī 2010). Politically, the prevailing wars between the tribes in the Arabian Peninsula during the 17th and the 18th centuries AD, led to the displacement of some tribes from the Arabian Peninsula (e.g. Utub tribe, see Chapter 2) to Kuwait (Mahjūb 1973; see also al-Kandārī 2010, 5-6), which was already inhabited (e.g. by the Bani Khalid tribe; see Chapter 2). The tribes established a small community, which developed economically with trade and exchange flourishing quickly. This attracted others to work in Kuwait by a process of intermittent immigration from Iraq and Iran (al-Kandārī 2010, 6).

Perhaps this image of the establishment of modern Kuwait mirrors processes in the past, that is the successful amalgamation of diverse communities with different cultures repeatedly over time: for example, the coexistence of Greeks and the local people of Failaka during the Hellenistic period (see Chapter 6); the coexistence of Christians and Muslims in the early Islamic period (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Economically, Kuwait seems to have consistently had extensive trade relations and it was probably a broker between Mesopotamia and the other countries in the southern Arabian Gulf. So we often witness the occurrence of foreign commercial offices in Failaka to facilitate trade transactions (see Chapter 3 and 5).

I attempted to explain these concepts through this thesis. Chapter One began by reviewing previous publications and archaeological missions that have worked in Kuwait. In Chapter Two, I considered the importance of the Arabian Gulf and the topographic and geological features of Kuwait, the historical sources up to modern

Kuwait and the invasion of Iraq, to give the reader a general overview. In Chapter Three, I discussed the Stone Age (predominantly Neolithic) in Kuwait to illustrate Kuwait's earliest known human activities. Furthermore, I presented the Ubaid in Mesopotamia. I considered the Kuwaiti Ubaid sites in detail and in the light of recent discoveries. I also examined the Ubaid distributions in northern and southern Mesopotamia. This information was presented to illustrate that Kuwait had close interactions with its neighbours from the beginnings. In Chapter Four, I demonstrated that the burial mound phenomenon is most common in the western parts of the Arabian Gulf. This occurrence might be the result of several factors, such as the *idea* of creating a burial mound, moving via trade and exchange (information exchange), or by people moving (e.g. nomads) and taking the concept of a mound with them. I have examined some of the finds from the burial mounds, such as beads, pottery and pearl**,** that may indicate trade connections between Kuwait and other areas. I discussed the burial mounds to consider if the builders were nomadic people or not**.** Moreover, I have discussed the skeletal analyses which possibly demonstrate that these skeletons belonged to nomadic people, who developed exchange relations with other areas in the Arabian Gulf. These were argued to be mostly mobile as no settlements have been found in the Sabbiyah area, or in other areas in the Arabian Gulf, that relate to the graves**.** Furthermore, I compared the Kuwaiti burial mounds with other burial mounds in the Arabian Gulf to see if there are similarities or differences between them. Most of the burial mounds in Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf have similar material remains, such as bronze ornaments, beads and shells. Perhaps these similarities highlight connections between Kuwait and the wider world that were not just based on trade and exchange.

In Chapter Five, I presented the characteristics of the Dilmun civilisation. Moreover, I introduced and discussed the known Kuwaiti Dilmun sites. This information was presented to show that Kuwait was settled in the past by several societies, as discussed in Chapter 3 with the Ubaid Culture, and in Chapter 4 with the Bronze Age cultures. In Chapter Six, I presented the proto-Hellenistic and Hellenistic sites in Kuwait.

In Chapter Seven, I considered why, how and when Christianity came into the Arabian Peninsula, and later to the Eastern Arabian Peninsula. I presented the known Christian sites in Kuwait by discussing the archaeology of Christianity in the Arabian Gulf. In doing so, I illustrated the similarities of church design layouts within Kuwait and the surrounding regions. I argued for the date of the al-Qusur church as being in existence during the Sasanian period (AD224 - 637). I introduced the Christian economy in the Gulf; for instance at al-Qusur we have evidence of ceramics that are also found in Mesopotamia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates. I examined the Syriac texts that mention the Christian societies and locations in the Gulf. All this information confirms that Kuwait had relationships with its neighbours in the north and south of the Arabian Gulf.

In Chapter Eight, I discussed the arrival of Islam to Kuwait, through the Islamic sites, which are mostly dated to the early Islamic period, such as Kadhima. I also illustrated many of the Arab tribes that lived in Kuwait, such as the Tanūkh and the Abd al-Qays. This chapter explained the importance of Kuwait’s strategic location on the pilgrimage and trade caravan routes in the north Arabian Gulf and demonstrated how connections were maintained with other regions in the Arabian Gulf.

In addition, this chapter discussed the interactions between Islam and Christianity, when Muslims began to first have control over the region. This chapter presented why Kuwait does not currently have an archaeological narrative regarding the middle Islamic sites. This chapter also discussed the Late Islamic periods and the probable connections between Kuwait and other regions in the Arabian Gulf or further away locations, such as Syria and Egypt. Furthermore, this chapter introduced the evidence for the fortification of Kuwait and its relations with others in the Gulf. In doing so, the lack of dominance of the Portuguese in this region was presented. Here, we have looked into the beginnings for the formation of modern Kuwait, as supported by the known archaeology with historical texts.

From an archaeological perspective, Kuwait has not yet been fully explored. Although we have found many important archaeological locations, there are still more exciting sites to be discovered. As such, the State of Kuwait needs to pay more attention to the field of archaeology in order to further preserve its heritage and culture, which is in the end, is part of the heritage and culture of all humanity. Kuwait must stop the deliberate destruction of its archaeological sites, whether it be by the government, multi-national companies or private individuals. Kuwait must cease the current projects, which will be held in Sabbiyah, until the completion of archaeological explorations. The increased interest in heritage and culture from other Gulf States (e.g. United Arab Emirates) highlights the benefits of such actions. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was recently placed on the World Heritage list through the site of Mada‘in Salih (al-Khurayif and al-‘Awaijan 2008, 7), and the current exhibition at the British Museum based upon Saudi Arabian archaeology (*The horse: from Arabia to Royal Ascot*) illustrates how national archaeological projects can benefit people’s knowledge internationally. Therefore, I propose that the State of

Kuwait builds its own core archaeological teams, and invites others to globally support them, to further investigate, explore and publish Kuwait for the benefit of its people and the world in general.

This work is important as it is the first thesis to discuss archaeology in Kuwait from 13000BC to the 18th century AD. Such an approach is timely and valid, being adopted recently by Potts (2012), in presenting the histories of the United Arab Emirates. Through each chapter of this thesis I have indentified some factors, such as, economy, policy, religion sociology, which have played a significant role on settlement activity in Kuwait. For example, the arrival of Greeks in the Arabian Gulf during the 3rd century BC directly influenced Kuwait, impacting upon its laws and social practices. There was coexistence between the Greek and the local population; an example of how this appears in the archaeological record is via two types of figurine: Eastern and Greek figurines (see Chapter 6).

Moreover, this thesis describes how the geographical location of Kuwait contributed to broadening economic relations. For example, Kuwait was a part of the Dilmun civilisation, which extended its trade relationship to north and south of the Arabian Gulf and became the dominant trade in the Arabian Gulf during the Bronze Age (see Chapter 5).

All large bodies of work face challenges; one of the main things that I had to attend to here was the difficulties of sourcing published works, and the ones located in the ‘grey literature’. One of my future projects will be to create a reader friendly version of this thesis, to serve as an introduction to Kuwait archaeology for undergraduate students and the general public. This type of publication does not currently exist. This work will link with an Archaeology Section that I am developing within Kuwait University Library – this also does not currently exist.

This thesis covers the histories of Kuwait from 13000BC through the beginnings of the modern nation state (*c*. 18^{th} century AD). If there was more space available, I would have liked to have discussed in more detail the contemporary archaeologies of Kuwait, as they are intimately linked with the past. For the moment, this will remain a topic for future research. In places, I have used detailed descriptions of the archaeology to tease out potential connections. At times though, I have had to remove sections of this, as it became too cumbersome for the Chapter, and obscured the key points I was making. One option was to create an Appendix to house this data – but I determined that this still did not add to the narratives I wanted to create. The new archaeology section in Kuwait University Library, that I am working on, will house this information for future researchers. This library will support the proposed Anthropology Department that I am working towards developing at Kuwait University with Professor al-Kandārī. This department will help train the future archaeologists and heritage managers of Kuwait. The Ministry of Information is also significant for the development of public awareness of archaeology in Kuwait. It could play a major role in informing about the importance of archaeology through different media such as, radio, television and newspapers (see Holtorf 2007). The Ministry could organize monthly lectures and public seminars, workshops, academic conferences – we could also offer to host a future World Archaeology Conference, or set up a new Kuwaiti-led Gulf State conference system. I will develop this in conjunction with working at the University.

This thesis has demonstrated that Kuwait has not existed in isolation form it surrounding regions since the beginnings of human occupation in the Mesolithic. This occurrence is in part due to its key geographical location in the Arabian Gulf, which has consistently made it ideal for facilitating exchange networks and the movements

of people. Access to both the land and sea have also enabled the movements of ideas, objects and people. Kuwait can therefore be seen as a location where diversity and the flow of philosophies have always occurred. Such a situation has continued till today, where modern Kuwait can be seen as one of the most globally interactive states in the Arabian Gulf. Exchange and social networks have enabled modern Kuwait to be not only one of the most democratic states in the Arabian Gulf, but also one of the most diverse in terms of different cultures in the Gulf. Archaeology demonstrates that Kuwait has had networks that extended well beyond it boundaries since its origins.

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